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[LADY REDWOOD WITH DOUBTFUL FRIENDS.]

THE GOLDEN HOPE.

BY MRS. H. LEWIS.

CHAPTER XLI.

Our dangers and delights are near allies;
From the same stem the rose and prickly rise.

Alphonse.

As we have stated, Hellice made her escape from a rear window of the Rookery at the very moment her enemy began his vigorous assault upon the front door. She was cool, clear-headed, and self-reliant, in the full possession of all those powers so necessary to her self-preservation. After making her mocking speech at the window, she withdrew into her chamber, gathered together the few possessions she had brought with her, took her shawl on her arm, and, lamp in hand, rapidly descended the stairs, making her way to the dining-room. Here she paused to collect a few articles of food, which prudence warned her she might require, and to drink a glass of generous wine, which effectually dispelled any languor that might have remained from the drug she had taken. As she replaced the glass upon the buffet, there came to her ears the sounds of vigorous pounding and angry voices.

"Mr. Darcy Anchester has a task before him that will employ the greater part of an hour at the very least," she said to herself, with a bright and mocking smile. "By the time he effects an entrance, I must be very near the station. At any rate, I must have secured my safety!"

She extinguished the light of her lamp, and proceeded quietly through the housekeeper's room to the kitchen. The windows of this latter room were all rather high from the ground, but Hellice's quick wit was ready to supply all deficiencies. She raised the sash cautiously, looked out, perceiving that no one was in the rear garden, and then carefully lowered out a short step-ladder, usually employed by the housekeeper in reaching otherwise unattainable jars at the top of her closets. The ladder

dropped into a thicket of rose-bushes, but found a firm foothold. The maiden then crept through the window, descended to the ladder, and made her way in safety to the ground.

Her first movement was then to drag the ladder to some distance, and conceal it in the midst of some shrubbery. Her second was to plunge through the dark laurel grove, through fields and pastures, until she had gained the road at a point nearly a mile distant from the Rookery, and beyond the rounds of assault; then she sat down by the roadside, under a tree, to decide where she should seek shelter.

She was flushed and excited; her pulse beat quickly, and her heart throbbed like the sound of a muffled drum. She wiped her heated forehead, and gave herself up to quick, calm, clear thought.

She believed Mr. Anchester's assertion with regard to the pursuit of unfriendly detectives, and her first decision was to avoid the railway station nearest the Rookery, lest an officer of the law should be waiting for her there—of any other village or station in the neighbourhood, or within many miles, she was profoundly ignorant. She could not appeal to any of the cottagers for protection. To seek shelter in their homes, at the hands of their wives, would be simply useless. No one who owned Mr. Anchester as master would dare to play him false. Besides, these simple valley-labourers were little better than serfs of the soil. To be expelled from their humble homes would be worse than death to them and their families. Hellice did not entertain the idea of appealing to them for more than an instant. Clearly she must depend upon herself. She saw no way open to her except to keep to the road during the night, and when morning came to seek at some solitary farmhouse a conveyance to some distant town in which she might hide from all pursuit, Mr. Anchester's included. Her purse was well filled; she was young, strong and lithe; and her heart was full of strength and hope. Friendless and homeless as she was, she felt that there were conditions worse than friendlessness and homelessness—worse even than a lonely death amid those dreary night solitudes. Better every pang that Fate could bestow, than a

life as Mr. Anchester's wife—for such a life would be simply a living death!

Hellice sprang up from that wayside stone, with a clear calm brow and serene untroubled gaze. She walked along the road, with a quick, even step, and the soft summer moonlight fell around her, lighting up her way, and the shadows of the bordering pines fell now and then across the brightness. There was life in those gloomy trees, life in the bushy thickets, life in the pleasant night air. Birds that are mute by day were calling to each other through the stillness, and, if their songs had no farther end, they served to cheer the heart of the young and desolate maiden, as she pressed onward.

She was tempted to run at the utmost possible speed, but wise and thoughtful prudence restrained her steps to a brisk, energetic walk. She knew that she must not exhaust her strength at the outset. With her light burden scarcely felt, she hurried over the stony road, exultant in her freedom, in her continued right of faithfulness to her only love, and profoundly grateful for the tender and watchful Providence that had prevented the success of Mr. Anchester's artfully-concocted designs. The course she was taking was that which led to the railway-station, but it was the girl's intention to turn into a cross road, as soon as she had left the valley entirely behind her.

The road was so uneven and stony that the walking soon became difficult to the tenderly-reared maiden. Her delicate boots were not heavy enough to protect her feet from the obstacles in her path. The long, steep hill that led up out of the bowl-like valley was very exhaustive to wind and strength, and Hellice was forced repeatedly to sit down and rest. The buoyant strength and lightness that had, in her Indian home, been unimpaired after a night of dancing, was less available here. It was like yoking Pegasus to a plough—the maiden's toiling over that weary road.

"Oh, dear! I thought I was so strong!" said the girl, impatiently, as sitting on a fallen tree near the middle of the hill, she looked down into the gloomy valley. "I need not be troubled, however. I



have gained a start that Mr. Anchester cannot lessen!"

Satisfied by this reflection, she turned her gaze towards the Rookery. The lights still gleamed from its front windows, but other lights were gleaming from attic and chamber, from parlour and hall, that attested a search throughout the mansion.

It was plain that Mr. Anchester had effected an entrance to the dwelling, and had entered upon a vain search for her.

Hellice laughed gleefully at the thought—with laughter that trickled out in music sweeter than that uttered by the birds.

"He is looking for me!" she said, aloud, watching with bright eyes the lights that danced like will-o'-the-wisps about the mansion. "Now under a couch, I fancy; now behind bed-hangings; now in the lumber-attic; now in dress-closets, and now, perhaps, behind boxes and barrels in the store-room! He expects to find me crouching and wooping. He expects to drag me out, and frighten me to death with his Blue-beard frowns! He expects also, I dare say, to drug me again, before I shall have time to denounce him or attempt to flee! Deluded creature! How he would rave if he could see me sitting there three or four miles away, laughing at him! I wish some good fairy would only present him with a picture of me at this very moment!"

And again this sweet, girlish laughter bubbled forth. A stranger who could have seen her then, and who knew nothing of the maiden's strangely deep nature, would have thought her the incarnation of childish merriment, and would have wondered that, when she had such great cause for tears, she could laugh so merrily. But, though Hellice's heart was oppressed with a terrible burden, and though the clouds of sorrow had darkened about her, she was not one to turn her back upon any ray of light or sunshine. Her brave, strong, resolute spirit was always inclined to cheerfulness, and through all her trials, as we have said, she carried in her heart a precious, golden hope, born in the hour of greatest darkness, and shining throughout the changing glooms that followed, like a glorious unfading bow of promise.

She watched the lights as they flickered and faded. She knew that the search was over, that Mr. Anchester realized the fact of her escape. Still she set these thoughts to know something of her enemy's next movements. She saw lights flashing over the lawn and through the shrubbery. She saw forms moving through the broken gate and up and down the road. Noises approached in the direction in which she had come, and she still felt safe. The men seemed, most of them, to have proceeded to the little hamlet in the very bottom of the valley, not far from the Rookery, and Hellice fancied that they had relinquished the search, and retired to their homes.

She was destined, however, to be soon undeceived. For, while she continued to gaze, she saw the men re-appear, mounted on their stout farm-horses, and bearing torches that burned luridly and with weird effect. The little cavalcade went back to the Rookery, and Hellice distinguished in the midst of the group a figure taller than the others, which, by its commanding gesticulations with a flaming torch, Hellice knew to be that of Mr. Anchester. She watched the group until it separated, one half going on that part of the road leading to the sea-shore, and the remaining half following in her track. The latter party was headed by her enemy.

She arose and continued her journey, keeping in the shade of the trees instead of walking in the middle of the road, as she had done before. Mr. Anchester's energy and perseverance in pursuit of her had inspired her with new thoughts.

"Why is he so anxious to marry me?" she mused. "It was Cecile whom he loved in India, notwithstanding he denies the fact now. Cecile told me on shipboard that he had promised to follow her as soon as papa's business had all been settled. Why did he seek me out at Holly Bank and offer me his love? He is proud and ambitious, as I well know. It is not in his nature to love nobly and generously. It is not in his nature to marry one who is suspected to be a secret poisoner, unless he could gain greatly by such an alliance. He would consider nothing gain, unless it came in the shape of wealth or social position. Would a marriage with me conduce to either?"

She smiled bitterly, placed her shawl on the other arm, and pressed on.

"A marriage with poor Hellice Glintwick would only embarrass him," she said, decidedly, answering her own question. "A girl rejected by her kindred, pursued by detectives on a horrid charge, the suspicion of which means life-long disgrace, homeless, friendless, and poor, is not one to exalt him in the eyes of the world. He has some motive besides 'in his actions. He has been playing a part. My

good sense tells me, that. But why? Why should he drug me so that he might marry me, even against my will? What could he gain by it?"

She turned the question over in her mind as she hastened onwards. Her suspicions against Mr. Anchester were active, and every moment's thought gave them fresh strength and intensity, as well as pointed to direct and truthful conclusions.

"I must search for his motive outside of myself," thought the girl. "He was papa's most intimate friend. He watched over papa in his last illness. He was with him when he died. Possibly papa told him which was Lady Redwoode's child and which his own. Can it be—?"

She stopped abruptly, pale and breathless, her eyes glowing like stars, her breath coming and going between her parted lips with frightened rapidity. The hope she had inwardly and secretly cherished, had found words to express itself in her soul. She was bewildered and confused, tremulous with sudden joy, not unmixed with fear and trepidation.

"Can it be?" she repeated, almost shocked at her own audacity.

At that moment fell on her ears the sounds of the near approach of her enemies. Forgetting her suspicions, alive only to her personal danger, she looked around. She could see them plainly, as they passed up the road in the bright moonlight. They were already coming up the hill, and she had not reached its summit. Evidently, they were spurring their steeds, and she would speedily be overtaken if she adhered to her present course. As she arrived at this conclusion, a loud shout arose from her pursuers, and she knew that she had been seen.

The shout was re-echoed, and in the exultant sound Hellice detected the savage voice of Mr. Anchester. As it died away, the louder ring of hoofs succeeded, and she knew that her enemies were hurrying on to their prey.

She looked anxiously for an avenue of escape.

On either side of the narrow road was a low, thick growth of trees that clothed the hill and grew low into the valley. Without hesitation, Hellice plunged into the cover of this wood, and concealed herself until her pursuers came up. She had not long to wait. The little cavalcade soon made its appearance, paused at the spot where she had been seen, and she heard the voice of Mr. Anchester, saying:

"I saw her here myself. She was in cover with that wretched creature. She is not to be seen anywhere on the road now. She has taken shelter in the wood, or is hurrying up the hill under cover of these roadside trees. Her object is to get to the railway. Now, two of you must ride on to the station, keeping an eye to the sides of the road. The other two must come with me, and we will beat the wood hereabouts and follow you up. A hundred pounds to the man who secures her and brings her to me! Be cautious, vigilant and watchful. Make no disturbance in the village—but she cannot get there before you! Remember, a hundred pounds to her captor!"

The man assented eagerly, and two spurred on up the road, while two prepared to beat the wood with Mr. Anchester. They knew on which side of the road to look, knowing that Hellice had not crossed the path since they had seen her.

The maiden did not linger in her hiding-place. Conscious of the dangers before her, she turned her steps, and hurried down the hill into the valley. There was no path to guide her. The gloomy trees shut out most of the moonlight. Her way was necessarily circuitous, for the wood was full of thickets, young trees, and bushes. It was easier to descend than to ascend, and she soon left her enemies far behind her. She fled over the ground like a hunted chamois, springing lightly through the clear places, moving more cautiously through the denser shades. She gathered her dress about her waist to protect the silken fabric from injury, mindful even then that it would not be well to appear in a strange place on the morrow in a tattered condition, lest she should bring on herself the scrutiny she desired to avoid.

In this way she skirted the Rookery mansion, and hurried on in a line parallel to the road leading to the sea-shore. She did not venture out of the shadows of the trees, and it was well that she did not, for, after a time, the party that had proceeded in that direction returned homewards, hastening to the aid of Mr. Anchester. She then slackened her pace somewhat, mounted the hill, and sat down to rest upon its top, fatigued beyond all expression.

She had sat there but a little while, when she heard the sound of wheels coming up from the valley. Peering out from her retreat, she beheld the approach of the old chaise and its decrepit motive power. She comprehended that the rickety conveyance had not been despatched in pursuit of her, and a closer scrutiny revealed to her that its occupants were the old minister and Sandy of the Rookery.

"Safe! Safe!" she murmured, with a long breath of relief. "That good old man will protect me, I am sure!"

She waited until the vehicle had gained the brow of the hill, and had paused a moment to rest the ancient steed, as was Sandy's usual custom, then she emerged from the shadow so suddenly as to frighten the horse, and to startle the weak-witted lad almost into a fit of hysterics. Her sudden appearance shook the nerves even of the old minister, who had been greatly disturbed by the, to him, unparalleled events of the evening.

"Do not fear, Sandy. It is I!" said Hellice, in her clear, sweet tones.

"Miss Hellice!" gasped the lad, in a tremour of delight. "Is it really Miss Hellice?"

"Really and truly, Sandy," responded the maiden, with a faint smile. "I am safe so far!"

"Thank an over-ruled Providence!" exclaimed the old minister, his pale, thin face lighting up with a glow of thankfulness.

"I suppose you were called to the Rookery, sir, to marry me to Mr. Anchester," said Hellice, addressing the old gentleman. "It is not necessary for me to tell you that I had been partially drugged, and that I did not entirely awoke from my stupor until the last moment: Mr. Anchester is a villain—an unscrupulous villain! He is searching for me now on the opposite hill. He will scour the valley and the surrounding country. So far I have eluded his search. I left to myself, I must inevitably fall into his hands on the morrow. Oh, sir, in the name of the gentle, loving Master whom you serve, I ask your protection!"

"You shall not sink in vain!" said the old minister. "My home and my protection, such as they are, are yours! I am old and feeble, but with what strength I have, I will defend you. Get into the stable, my child, and you shall soon be in a place of safety."

He alighted with some difficulty, assisted the weary girl to a seat and placed himself beside her, enjoining Sandy to hasten to a place of safety.

"For there's no knowing but they may track the young lady in this direction," he said. "We stole away without permission, and on our way we met several men who insisted on looking into the vehicle, fully persuaded that the maiden was within. Their suspicions may revive. They may turn and follow us."

Sandy's soul re-echoed these fears, and he whipped his steed unmercifully; but the animal, beaten other than the most patient beast in the world, three lives must inevitably have been sacrificed. As it was, the horse permitted itself to be goaded into a revival of its youthful speed, and flew over the ground in a manner that caused the minister now and then to groan in apprehension of a catastrophe.

As to Hellice, she dropped her head on her bosom and fell asleep!

"Poor child!" said the old gentleman, with fatherly kindness, as he looked upon the lovely face and little dark head. "She is wearied to the last verge of exhaustion. She prolonged her flight until her feet were no longer able to sustain her. Poor little creature! It was providential we came upon her as we did, and it will go hard if old Margery Locke and I have not room in house and heart for her! She could not have fallen into better hands!"

He proved the truth of his assertion by caring for her with paternal kindness. He drew her weary head upon his shoulder, folded her shawl about her, and made her position as comfortable as the cramped accommodations would permit. He felt himself amply rewarded for his care, when he saw that the maiden slept on in peaceful, trusting confidence in him, and his old eyes dimmed with tears as he vowed again to himself to protect her with his life.

"There seems to be a mystery about her, Sandy lad," he said. "Whatever it is, though, I am well assured that she is as innocent and pure as a little child. Do you know aught of her, Sandy?"

"Nothin', sir," replied the lad, surprised and delighted at the minister's declaration. "Why, I said myself there's a mystery about her. She's Miss Hellice—that's all I know, sir."

Having declared what he knew positively, Sandy proceeded to tell what he suspected and surmised, going off into a long rhapsody about Hellice's possible and probable antecedents, borrowing the most improbable features from his favourite romances, and weaving them into one impossible whole. Fortunately for his tranquillity and self-satisfaction, the good man permitted him to ramble on without hearing or hearing a word he said.

"Mr. Anchester mustn't suspect where Miss Hellice has been taken," concluded the lad. "I'd take her away, sure's anything. Them men at home don't dare go against him; besides, they'd sell themselves for a hundred 'oun'! A hundred 'oun' is a mint o' money," he added, explanatory, for the

benefit of the good minister. "So, when I go back to the Reekery, I'll keep my tongue between my teeth. Penal servi—what is it? Oh, servitudo for life wouldn't make me tell where Miss Hellice is hidin'."

The minister heard and approved these latter declarations, and took pains to impress upon the mind of the simple lad that the maiden stood in great danger from the designs of her enemy.

While they thus talked and conversed, the chaise took its way along a cross road that ran parallel with the coast, and afterwards turned into another leading down to the sea. At length the travellers approached a small hamlet of simple cottages, mostly occupied by fishermen. At the nearest extremity of the hamlet stood a small stone church, if the unpretending building could be called by that name, and beside the church, in its very shadow, surrounded by an ample garden, stood the old-fashioned manse, the minister's home.

It was a quiet, pleasant place in the soft night-gloom, with its rows of flower-beds, its tiny shrubbery, and ample vegetable garden. The sea was a mile or two distant, but in plain sight. The hamlet was not far from the spot which Hellice had visited that day, and, indeed, the fishermen whose boat she had used attended that little church when they attended any.

"Here we are, my dear," said the minister, gently arousing Hellice to wakfulness. "You are safe, my child, at the house of old David Locke, the minister, and here comes the old wife to welcome us!"

Hellice sat up, quite awake, and a great deal refreshed by her timely sleep. The minister descended to the ground and helped her out, and Sandy sprang forward and opened the gate for them. At the same moment a stout, pleasant old lady emerged from the dwelling, and came down the walk to welcome her husband. She stood in surprise as her gaze fell on Hellice.

"Tut, dame!" said her husband, smiling. "This young lady is in sore trouble, and needs a home and friends. I do not know who she is, nor whence she comes, but it is enough for us to know that she requires our protection and care. She has been sorely persecuted, poor child."

The good dame came forward, looked steadily for an instant into the pure face of the maiden, then stooped silently, and gave her a warm kiss of welcome.

"I think I shall be entertaining an angel, and not unawares," she said, with hearty warmth. "Come in, dear child. Come to our hearts as well as our home!"

Hellice, with one of those sweet impulses that made her character so charming, flung her arms around the good dame's neck and kissed her in return. Then she gave her hand to Sandy, thanked him for his devotion to her, and overjoyed him by her gentle gratitude. A moment later the chaise rolled away with its occupant, and the warm-hearted minister, his wife and guest, entered the dwelling.

CHAPTER XLII.

So the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused.

LADY REDWOOD did not find a final resting-place in the dreaded Pool, as her enemies and the fishermen believed, nor was her fair form resting anywhere beneath the restless waves.

The little boat of which Mr. Forsythe had caught a glimpse, as it passed behind an adjacent point of rocks, and the remembrance of which he had so soon lost, that little vessel had borne upon its deck the fainting lady whose death had been so cunningly devised.

She had been preserved from a terrible fate as if by a miracle!

The wind had swept her beyond the projecting headland, completely out of the observation of her enemies. She had been buoyed up by her voluminous skirts, made after the fashion of the day. At first, in the wild whirl of horror and despair, she had given herself up for lost. The discovery that her death had been planned, that the two she had loved and cherished had treacherously plotted against her life, had momentarily paralyzed her. But when she had been borne beyond their view, and had found herself alone on the waters, and had heard the moaning and beating of the surf upon the cruel rocks, a wild instinct of self-preservation awoke within her.

In earlier days she had known how to swim with the ease and dexterity of a mermaid. That knowledge returned to her now in her hour of greatest extremity. She put out her hands under the water, and supported her head above its surface. Then she gave a wild glance over the little bay she had entered, praying for her escape from the yawning,

jagged rocks, which now and then showed themselves above the surf like the pointed teeth of a huge and deadly submarine monster.

That glance showed her that she was not quite alone in the bay—that a little fishing sloop was close at hand, and bearing down upon her rapidly. That she had been seen by the sloop's solitary occupant was instantly evident, for a rough, strong voice sung out:

"Bear up a minute longer and you are saved!"

Lady Redwood strove to reply, but her voice died away in a low, faint moan that seemed to belong to the beating surf. She kept herself afloat by a desperate effort, for she felt her strength gradually slipping from her.

"How interminable the moments seemed!"

The boat came nearer and nearer. She could hear the flapping of its sail, the creaking of its cords, the movements of its occupant. Its course through the water sounded fearfully loud and distinct, like the rushing of a cataract. The sound of the waves against the rocks grew deafening. Her senses were primitively sharpened. It seemed to her that she stood upon the confines of another world.

She closed her eyes wearily, ceased her efforts to support herself in the water, and felt herself sinking beneath the engulphing waves.

And then she was conscious that a strong hand was clutching at her, that she was drawn from the water, that she was laid upon a solid deck. And then light and sound faded alike from her, and she sank into unconsciousness.

She had indeed been rescued from certain death for in a moment more she would have drifted into the deep Pool, that held tenaciously all that the sea gave it. Her bonnet and veil, with other articles of wearing apparel, fell off as she was lifted to the deck of the sloop, and floated to the spot that must inevitably have claimed her body, but for this timely rescue. She lay senseless, motionless, with her streaming hair, her heavy garments, and so fair, so pale, so deadly white, that one would have dreamed her spirit fled.

Her rescuer, the owner of the sloop, was an elderly man, with deep-set eyes, a red face, a bearded chin, dishevelled, uncombed locks, and a fisherman's garb. He had not the look of frankness and honesty. And, as he bent over the unconscious lady, and saw the gleam of costly jewels around her throat, on her wrists, and on her fingers, his eyes sparkled greedily, and an avaricious look overspread his features.

"A regular prize," he muttered. "She's dead, sure enough, but them stones on her are worth more'n all I ever saw in my life. They're enough to make a man rich, to give him a whole fleet o' smacks, and to let him lay off at his ease on shore, while other fellows do his work. I am the luckiest chap! Just my luck to be so near the capsiz, to see this lady, and to pick her up. Wonder if anybody saw me!"

He looked seaward at the fishing-vessels that were hurrying to Mr. Forsythe's aid. He was partly shielded from their view by the pointed rocks. A moment's survey convinced him that his rescue of Lady Redwood had been unobserved. Exultant in his prize, and anxious only to creep away unseen, he adjusted his sail to the shifting wind, and moved up the coast, disappearing finally around the headland, as we have described.

When he had gained the greater security of a second bay, more sheltered than the first, he did not relax his speed or his care of the vessel, contenting himself with bestowing an occasional glance upon his unconscious guest. That she was dead he really believed. He feasted his eyes upon the jewels that shone on her cold white hands, and chucked'd to himself over his great prize, over the probable astonishment and delight of his wife, and over his prospective ease and wealth.

The boat sped on, now faster, now slower, as the wind permitted, until the fisherman had placed at least three miles of coast between him and the scene of the recent disaster. At that time he found himself at the entrance of a narrow cove, and he headed into it, making directly towards the shore.

There was a strip of white beach, two or three decaying row-boats turned bottom up to the sun, and but little more than half-way beyond the reach of the waves a ruined boat-house, and directly at the back of all these stood a small cobble-stone cottage.

This was the fisherman's home.

There were no other houses to be seen in the vicinity. There was a village half a mile distant, and this cottage was like an outpost or sentinel.

A woman stood in the open door, shading her eyes from the sun by holding her hand above her brows. She was large and heavily built, with a brown face, brown hands, and a weather-beaten look. Evidently, she was used to sharing her husband's toils on the sea, and her coarse attire was well-suited to her mode of life. She waited until the sloop came

very near the shore and anchored, then she walked down to the beach, looking curiously at the senseless figure upon the deck.

"What's that?" she demanded, in a rough voice. The fisherman made a gesture commanding silence, and looked cautiously towards the dwelling.

"There's no one there, Rills," declared the woman, impatiently. "What ails you? Have you got a good haul?"

"A precious good haul!" returned the fisherman, lifting the form of Lady Redwood in his arms, and descending with it into a small boat that he had just let down into the water. "It's a drowned woman, Jane."

"Is she dead?"

"Yes" was the reply, as Rills rowed ashore, and sprang out upon the beach. "Heave ahead now. Ask no questions till we've got the door locked between us and t' outside."

The woman restrained her curiosity sufficiently to obey. She proceeded in advance to the cottage, and flung open the door of an inner room, the dwelling being divided into two chambers. The fisherman followed in her steps, and laid down his burden upon a clean but humble couch, while his wife hastened to bar the outer door.

"There's our fortin!" declared the fisherman, pointing to the insensible figure of the baroness, when his wife returned. "I saved the lady just as she was a sinkin'. Look at them diamonds on her, Jane. They've got money enough in 'em to make a lady o' you."

"What, them bits o' shining stones?" cried the woman, in astonishment, raising the lady's hand and staring at the gems thereon.

"Yes, them bits o' stones!" asserted Rills, triumphantly. "I ain't been a sailor for nothin', Jane. I ain't been to Brazil, and Injy, and all them places for nothin'. I know what diamonds are. Look at them about her throat. See 'em shine! Ain't they beauties?"

The woman, somewhat incredulous, essayed to examine the brooch so greatly admired by her husband. As she moved her hand towards the lady's throat, she detected a faint fluttering under the bodice, a sign of Lady Redwood's returning consciousness.

"Why, she ain't dead!" she exclaimed, retreating a step.

"Not dead!" repeated Rills, angry at the declaration. "Yes, she is dead. And as soon as I can strip off them 're jewels, she'll be buried too. I'm goin' to carry her out to sea to-night."

"I tell you she is alive!" interrupted the woman, observing a faint contraction of the lady's hands. "Go into the other room, Rills. The lady's in a faint-like, an's no more drowned than I am!"

She pushed her husband out of the chamber, and devoted herself to her guest's recovery. Coarse and rough as she was, she moved with a gentle touch, and kind-heartedness that wealth and breeding could not excel.

The lady's rare and glorious beauty looked to her like that of a superior being. With a reverent hand, she loosened the clinging garments, wrung out the heavy, dripping hair, chafed the cold limbs, and administered hot draughts of whiskey—a sovereign remedy for all ills in that, as in many other humble households.

The result of her ministrations was the restoration of the lady to life and consciousness. The heavy eyelids lifted themselves feebly, the pale face expressed surprise and inquiry, and the feeble voice murmured:

"Saved! Saved! I thought I was drowning!"

"You are on shore and in safe hands, lady," said the fisherman's wife, earnestly, endeavouring to tame her rough voice to softer cadences.

Lady Redwood smiled faintly, endeavoured to speak again, but passed away into a second faintness, from which she was at length aroused by her husband's voice to the delirium of fever.

"She's goin' to be dreadful ill, I'm afraid," said the woman, aloud, as she looked pityingly upon her guest. "I know what to do though, an' she might ha' had a worse nurse than I am."

She lifted the baroness to a rude bench that stood against the wall, and proceeded to make up the bed anew with great care, producing from a rude oaken chest lines that she had spun before her marriage, and which she reckoned as her choicest treasure. She then divested the lady of her wet garments, putting upon her a clean though coarse night-dress, and laid her among the pillows, covering her as carefully as though she had been an infant.

She then went into the outer room, where her husband awaited her in moodiness and gloom.

"The lady is alive and likely to get well," she said, coming to his side. "She's got a fever now that may throw her back some time, but it's my opinion she'll come out all right."

"What's her name?" demanded Rills, sullenly, with the air of one who considered himself defrauded.

"I don't know. She ain't in her right mind. But she's some great lady, as them dimons prove."

"True. Where are the dimons?"

"I've put 'em away," said the woman, firmly. "They are horn, not oun, Rills. I shall save 'em for her against she gets well. Now you must go and let her friends know she's livin'—"

"I can't. What excuse can I make for runnin' off with her?" demanded the fisherman. "They'll rest me for robbery. I sha'n't go nigh 'em. She may die yet, and what's the use o' harerin' up their feelings? If she dies, the dimons will be oun. There ain't no use o' askin' me to tell her friends, Jane, till we see if she lives."

The woman was unable to prevail against this decision, and at last reluctantly acquiesced in it. The couple consulted together on the best plan for keeping the presence of their guest a secret from their neighbours and friends, and Rills consented to the exercise of all his wife's kind intentions towards the baroness, remarking:

"We're sure to be paid whether she lives or not. If she gets well, she'll reward us liberally for our care of her. Maybe that would be better than the dimons," he added, reflectively, "for I might have trouble sellin' 'em."

Thus encouraged, the fisherman's wife gave vent to her kindly pity for the lovely invalid. She did not summon a physician to her, considering herself fully competent to treat the disease. In her simple neighbourhood, Jane Rills was accounted quite a doctress, and she felt a sort of consequence in exercising her skill upon a nobly-born and nobly-bred lady.

Despite her care and skill, however, the fever-dreams held the sensor of the baroness in thrall for several days. She raved of Redwood, of Hellice, of Cecile, of Mr. Foraythe, and talked, pleaded and laughed by turns, frightening Rills from the cottage, and engaging the sympathy of the womanly heart that beat under the rough exterior of the fisherman's wife. The simple remedies known to Jane were exhausted upon her, and at last in the utmost despair the woman gave her the cooling drinks she demanded, and opened wide the simple casement windows, letting in to the close sick-chamber the sweet, salt summer-breezes.

"She'll die any ways, I think," said Jane to her husband. "And she may as well have what she wants before she dies. Of course, the cold water and fresh air will kill her, as she's in a fever, but I ain't got the heart to deny her."

It was well she had not, for the patient began to mend from the moment the more intelligent treatment had been entered upon. The fever took a favourable turn, the delirium abated and finally subsided, and Lady Redwood entered upon the high-road to recovery. She speedily comprehended where she was and the incidents of her rescue, but she did not explain her identity, or refer in any way to her past.

As she rapidly convalesced, Rills became gloomy and despondent.

In plying his trade during her illness he had learned that she was the baroness of Redwood; that she was supposed to have been drowned in the Pool; that her daughter and son-in-law had gone into mourning for her; that they had entered into possession of her estate; that notices of her death had been published—that, in short, she was dead to the world and to her friends.

He did not know how he was to account for his secrecy with regard to her rescue. He lived day and night in terror of the law. He was moody, uneasy, and restless, starting at every step, and dreading above all things that his guest might be found in his cottage, before she could be sufficiently recovered to go elsewhere.

At length he took a desperate resolve to end his suspense.

"Jane," he said, one evening, more than a week after the rescue of her ladyship, as the couple sat in the outer room together, "is the lady asleep? I want to talk with you."

"Yes, she's asleep," replied the woman, with a glance at the open door of the inner room. "She's sleepin' like a tired child, poor dear. What do you want to say?"

"You know she is a great lady, Jane, the widow of a lord, a baron? She is a lady herself—Lady Redwood."

"I know it," answered Jane. "She said as much in her ravings. She's a real lady in words and actions too, Rills. Why, she's actually afraid o' makin' me too much trouble, and she's as gentle and dainty as a bird—that's what she is."

"Her folks think she's dead!" said the fisherman, moodily. "Her daughter that was with her, you

know, and her son-in-law, they've put on black for her. It's been in all the papers she's dead. And a lawyer chap was around here after the accident a lookin' for the body. He offered a tremendous reward. How my fingers itched for it, and I didn't dare to say that the lady was alive and in my cot. I'd been taken if I had. I wish I'd given her up to her friends at the time!" and Rills sighed regretfully.

"So they all think the lady's dead?" questioned the woman.

"Yes. The daughter's took possession of her property, and lords it at Redwood—the place where the lady lived. It's a dreadful affair for me!"

The fisherman's wife began to think the same, and offered her sympathy so earnestly that she did not hear the faint moan that came from the bed-room—a token that the baroness had heard and comprehended the story.

"The lady'll soon be well," said Jane; "and she'll come home and claim her own. She'll protect you, I know—"

"Unless she's found here first," interrupted Rills. "And anyhow she may be angry with me for fetchin' her off. She'll suspect the stealin' dodge. These great folks don't think no more o' such as you an me than we think o' crabs. It's pretty much about the same. She'll be mad because I didn't take her to her daughter! I'll put an end to my troubles to-night, see if I don't!"

He spoke the last sentence under his breath, and it escaped the hearing of his wife. She answered him soothingly, told him that the lady had been able to sit up for an hour that day, and that she would come into the outer room on the morrow, with other simple gossip that increased her husband's despondency. At last, despairing of enlivening him, she went into the inner room, finding the baroness wide awake, and with a countenance that showed the lady had been an unintentional listener to the conversation.

Seizing the opportunity, Rills took up his tar-paulin hat and quitted the cottage.

"I will put an end to my troubles," he repeated, as he walked down to the beach. "I'll have advice this very night. Luke Jenson'll help me out o' my scrape if any one will. I've done him many a good turn, and he'll bear it in mind now!"

He rowed out to his sloop, drew up his boat, and trimmed his sail. Then hauling up the anchor, he threaded his way out of the cove, and proceeded down the coast before a good breeze, that sent his vessel skimming the water like a gull.

The run of several miles to the vicinity of Sorel Place was made in good time. The moon was shining brightly when Rills anchored his sloop, and rowed ashore at the very point at which Lady Redwood had embarked on her nearly fatal excursion. Leaving his boat on the shore, the fisherman walked up the road until he came to Sorel Place, half a mile distant from the sea.

The house was dark as usual in front, but Rills walked around to the rear, where a light gleamed from a window.

"They're at home," he muttered, halting before the door. "If Luke proves false to me—but he won't," he added, nervously for the interview. "He will know I meant to steal the jewels, but he won't betray me, I'm sure!"

Without farther hesitation, he opened the door abruptly, and entered a small square room, lighted by a single lamp, tenanted by Mrs. Jenson and her son Luke. The two were sitting by a small deal table, with a little heap of gold between them. They started guiltily at the sudden entrance of their visitor, and Luke swept the money into his pocket as quickly as if it had been fatal evidence against him.

"My! How you startled me!" cried Mrs. Jenson, in a shrill, frightened voice. "Why didn't you knock, Rills?" she asked, sharply. "Luke and I was a countin' up our savings. We're poor enough, anybody knows, but we have laid by a little for a rainy day."

Rills was too pre-occupied to notice her alarm and uneasiness, or to attach any particular importance to the pile of coins he had seen. He took the seat proffered him by Luke, and said, coming to his business at once:

"I'm in trouble, friends, and have come to you for help. I've done many good turns—"

"But we can't spare money!" interposed Mrs. Jenson, nervously.

"Tain't money I want, but advice and assistance," replied the fisherman, resting his elbows on his knees, and his chin on his hands. "I've got into a scrape, Luke, an' I don't know which way to turn. Let the old woman go into the other room—but never mind though, she can keep a secret, and I may need her help."

"What have you done, Rills?" inquired his host.

The fisherman hesitated, but his apprehensions came over him again, goading him to confession.

"I'll make a clean breast of it," he said, uneasily. "You mustn't be hard on me, Luke. You ain't always been honest yourself. You know the lady last week that was drowned when your boat capsized?"

Luke nodded without speaking, and his mother turned away her head.

"Well, I may as well out with it," said Rills, desperately. "I was at hand, and I—well, I picked her up, and took her home!"

"What!" cried his listeners, in a breath.

"It's the truth, friends!" declared the fisherman, not marking the agitation of his listeners. "Lady Redwood is at my house at this minute! She's had a fever, but Jane's brought her through with it. She's almost well!"

The Jensions were almost stupefied at this intelligence. Luke's face grew pale with fear and apprehension.

"I saved her," said the fisherman, misunderstanding their silence, "and thought she was dead. There was jewels on her, and I thought I might as well have 'em as the fishes; so I carried her home, an' she came to, and is almost well. You see I'm in a scrape, and what to do I don't know. She was a stoppin' here, an' I thought I'd better come to you and get your advice!"

"You did right, Rills!" declared Luke Jenson, his brow clearing, and a look of exultation crossing his features. "I'll see you out of your trouble, old fellow. As the lady is still ill, I'll have her brought back here this very night in your sloop, and no one'll be the wiser. Then I'll let her friends know the truth, and represent your conduct as worthy a reward. I'll manage the thing for you, Rills, and I'll stand all the blame for the sake of old times. Mother'll nurse her up in a week. But you mustn't breath a word to any one that the lady's livin', till I've had time to make all clear, or you'll eat prison fare as sure as you're a livin' man!"

Rills shook Luke's hand in earnest gratitude, muttering his thanks.

"Come, let's be off!" said Jenson, releasing himself, and looking for his hat. "The lady must be got here secretly this very night. Come on!"

He stopped to whisper a few words to his mother, who still sat as if paralyzed, and then he led the way from the house. A few minutes later, and they were aboard the sloop, and on their way up the coast.

(To be continued.)

THAT'S HOW.

AFTER a great snow-storm a little fellow began to shovel a path through a large snow-bank before his grandmother's door. He had nothing but a small shovel to work with.

"How do you expect to get through that drift?" asked a man passing along.

"By keeping at it," said the boy, cheerfully, "that's how."

That is the secret of mastering almost every difficulty under the sun. If a hard task is before you, stick to it. Do not keep thinking how large or hard it is, but go at it, and little by little it will grow smaller and smaller, until it is done.

If a hard lesson is to be learned, do not spend a moment in fretting; do not lose a breath in saying, "I can't," or "I do not see how," but go at it, and keep at it. Study. That is the only way to conquer it.

ANTAGONISTIC SNAKES.—The implacable enmity between the black snake and the rattlesnake is one of the most curious facts in natural history. The former has a long thin body, jet black on the upper surface, and fading in rays towards the belly. Whenever he catches sight of his enemy he rushes to the attack, even though both be in captivity. The rattlesnake rarely awaits him, but slinks off with his utmost speed. The pursuer, however, is much the more active of the two, and unless some deep hole be near, never fails to overtake the foe. And then begins a curious combat which has often been witnessed. It is said that the rattlesnake makes no attempt to use his fangs, probably from a knowledge that they would be useless, but strives to meet the enemy with his own natural arms—the hug and strain. But unless the sizes be very disproportionate, the black constrictor is of course victorious, crushing his enemy's life out by successive contractions. When the rattler is dead, or at least motionless, the black snake gives one final hug, and then stretches himself out head to head, and swallows the vanquished. For this purpose he does not moisten the prey and gloat over it, according to his usual practice, but swallows it whole, sometimes before it is quite dead. He appears to care nothing for the poison. The black snake is harmless to man, and very rarely is he injured.—*Frederick Boyle, F.R.G.S.*



[GASTON AND HIS CHARGE.]

LILLIAN GASTON.

CHAPTER III.

LADY FITZGERALD said good-night to her visitor, and turned back to her luxurious parlour with a quiet smile of placid happiness on her red lips.

Anson Wharncliffe had the rare gift of knowing exactly how long he pleased people; and where he meant to make a favourable impression, he always took leave before there was the faintest sign, not of weariness, but of indifference. Lady Fitzgerald then was always left to think, "What an agreeable person Mr. Wharncliffe is! I wish he had not gone quite so soon!"

This night she came back to the table, and took up the comical toy which Dicky had found so securely wrapped in the mysterious package.

"What ingenuity of entertainment he displays!" she thought. "Dicky fairly idolizes Mr. Wharncliffe."

Then she smiled, and a faint red stole over the clear white of her cheek.

"Ahem! Euphemia, dear, can I have a word with you?"

"Why, father, are you here? I didn't hear you come in."

The Honourable Mr. Willoughby, magnificently attired in a scarlet dressing-gown with gold tassels, tiptoed across the room, and sank languidly into an easy-chair.

"Yes, I heard Mr. Wharncliffe taking leave, and I therefore resolved to look in upon you a moment, while Dickson is getting my chamber ready."

"You should have come while Mr. Wharncliffe was here. He told me some entertaining stories."

"He is a very entertaining man. At least, people call him so. He seems to be staying in this neighbourhood?"

And the honourable gentleman played with the gilt tassels, as he glanced over to the lady from the corner of his eyelid.

Lady Fitzgerald smiled calmly.

"Yes, he is to be here all the season. He has taken that shooting-box, as they call it, of Colonel Sprague's."

"Humph! I wasn't aware that he was a sporting character."

"Are all gentlemen required to be that who indulge in gunning?" she asked, playfully.

"Not all, certainly, who are on the track of game," returned the gentleman, smiling. "And it is precisely about that, Euphemia, that I wanted to speak with you."

"Well?"

And Lady Fitzgerald turned a jet bracelet to and fro on her white wrist.

"I find—I think, rather, that Mr. Wharncliffe's attentions here are getting noticeable, and it really seems to me that you ought to consider the matter, and make some definite conclusion—"

He stopped to cough a little nervously, for when Lady Fitzgerald arched her neck in her haughty fashion he stood a little in awe, even of his own daughter.

"I confess, sir, that I do not fairly understand your insinuation. What conclusion ought I to make? and why do you look so significant?"

"You can't mistake Mr. Wharncliffe's devotion, Euphemia?"

She shrugged her fair shoulders, and smiled again a little wickedly.

"I can name a dozen who are constantly declaring the same, and far more than Mr. Wharncliffe's looks dare imply."

"Yes, oh, yes. They are all your admirers, and no wonder! I was always proud of you, Euphemia, as a lover myself. But what I heard to-day made me determined to put you on your guard, that is all."

"You heard! Have people dared to gossip about me?"

And now the deep gray eye flashed, the red lip curled, and she looked like an insulted queen.

"Exactly. That is what I mean. People are whispering, insinuating, and all that sort of thing."

"What do they say?" demanded she.

"Why, they hint that your mourning is ended—that you are coming out of your seclusion into the world again. That you have found a successor for Sir Richard. That—that you give Mr. Wharncliffe more encouragement than any one else has received."

She took up the toy and played with it carelessly.

"And that is all, is it, father?"

"All! Good heaven, Euphemia—Lady Fitzgerald—is not that enough? I know the man is agreeable and entertaining, so that you are not aware just how it looks, his coming here so frequently, and in such a formal way; but—"

"I do not see anything so very remarkable in his visits. He was a very intimate friend of Sir Richard's; he is extremely fond of Dicky, and the child fairly dotes on him. Why, indeed, should he not come?"

"Euphemia," exclaimed the honourable Mr. Willoughby, in a despairing tone, "is it really true that this man has bewitched you—that you are forgetting Sir Richard?"

The colour surged hotly into her cheek.

"Forgetting Sir Richard? Have I not kept thrice the allotted time for decorous widowhood? Have I omitted the slightest tribute with respect to his memory? Do you wish me to go on, all my life, imuring myself?"

He stared at her in amazement.

"Other widows marry a second time, sir. Why should the world hawk about my name, if I follow their example?" she replied, with increasing earnestness.

"But this would be such an unsuitable alliance," stammered he.

"Unsuitable—in what respect? Is he not a gentleman of culture, of good repute? Would any one blush for him in good society?"

"But he is below your rank—has no fortune."

"What do I want with either? I have had both. The fortune, least of all, when I have my own, and the dowry left me by Sir Richard's marriage settlement? Fortune is the last thing that I need to look for—that I shall look for!" she added, vehemently.

"Then you already love him? He has supplanted Sir Richard's memory?" said the gentleman, in a tone of consternation.

What a light crept into the deep gray eyes! How finely-cut nostril curled!

"Father," said Lady Fitzgerald, "for you the mask shall drop. I will tell you what the memory of Sir Richard is to me. Even before the honeymoon was over, I knew there was a secret. I guessed the forced assumption of tenderness had no genuine truth in it. After his sudden death I found, in the private drawer of his escritoire, a package of letters, and a miniature of a beautiful woman. More than that—a diary with a page written on my wedding day, wild with anguish, maddened with bitter and unavailing regrets, passionate with love, which I knew was true love for another. That is my memory of Sir Richard! I have had rank and riches, now I yearn for something that will not turn to dead ashes at the touch—for true love."

The colour faded out of her face as she finished, and left the usual clear, cold fairness.

The honourable gentleman could not utter a word.

"I have omitted no slight token of respect to Sir Richard's memory. I have taught his child to honour it. You went with us to-day to carry over our weekly tribute to his grave. But I ask you to answer me fairly and candidly, do you wonder that, after six years of retirement, I am ready to throw aside these widow's weeds?"

"To become plain Mrs. Wharncliffe! And we

always believed you to be so proud!" exclaimed the father, dolefully.

"And I am proud, wickedly proud, or I should not hesitate a moment to clasp this pearl of price, true love, unto my heart, and, defying the world's laugh, find truest happiness," she answered, fiercely.

Mr. Willoughby arose nervously.

"We will talk about it another time," he said. "I am so agitated now, I am afraid I shall not sleep to-night. But, oh, Euphemia, I entreat you to do nothing rashly!" And, as if fearing to hear another word, he hurried across the room and vanished through the doorway.

With that same cold, bright scorn in her eyes, Lady Fitzgerald rang the bell.

"Ask Mr. Yelveton to come in with his reports."

The servant bowed and disappeared, and in a few moments more, a quick, firm step was heard without.

Again the scarlet leaped into her ladyship's cheek, a soft, lambent glow kindled in her eyes; but she moved her seat, and turned her head so that the face was all in shadow.

A tall, firm figure, with a head which the first glance of a careful observer discovered full of strong power and keen intellect, advanced into the room, and, with a respectful bow, stood waiting at the table for further orders.

"Be seated, Mr. Yelveton. I think I am now in the mood for crooked problems and confusing figures. You may tell me now all I refused to hear the other day."

Arthur Yelveton took an account-book from his breast-pocket, lifted those great, dark eyes of his one moment to the graceful figure, in that brief time betraying how full they were of hopeless, passionate adoration, and then opening the book proceeded to read the items, receipts, disbursements, rents, wages paid, and finally the sum total of the income of the estate for the last month.

Her ladyship heard him through without a single interruption. When he closed the book and made a movement to take leave, she extended her hand with a deprecating gesture.

"Be seated, please. I should like to talk with you a little."

The business agent of Poplar Reach bowed respectfully, and took a seat; but when this was done her ladyship still hesitated, as if at a loss how to commence. He seemed at last aware of her momentary embarrassment, and his eagle eye kindled, and a flush rose to the broad, intellectual forehead, as, throwing his head back, he exclaimed:

"Your ladyship has something of importance to say to me. You need not fear to wound my feelings. I already anticipate your communication. You wish to break to me, gently and kindly, that I am no longer needed here."

She raised those long, curling eyelashes of hers, and smiled, both at his pride and his anger.

"What, Mr. Yelveton! do you think I can be so blind to my own interest? What with your management and my expenditure, we are laying by a handsome surplus every year, besides improving the estate, so that its value is increasing tenfold. Dicky will have his hands full by-and-by, to spend all we are accumulating. No other agent could take your place, Mr. Yelveton."

The great deep eyes flashed.

"No agent, your ladyship. I frankly admit that, and without any idea of overrating my own services, I did not imagine that you intended to displace me by another paid subordinate; but—I understand—I have expected every day to hear—"

"Well?" in a voice of silver smoothness, the red lips arched in smiles.

"I am not deaf nor blind," said he, abruptly. And the lady saw that the words came through set teeth. "I knew you meant to tell me that your ladyship is about to take a husband, and give Poplar Reach a master."

"It would not be strange, would it?" murmured Lady Fitzgerald, in that low, confidential tone that few beside Arthur Yelveton had ever heard. "I am young still, naturally of a gay disposition, and these six years of retirement and seclusion would have dragged heavily enough but for Dicky. Dicky is my blessing, my darling, my treasure!"

Her mother's tenderness thrilled richly in her voice, and gleamed brightly in her eyes. "But Dicky must soon be sent away to school, and then what shall I do? You, and you only, know why the memory of Sir Richard is not able to warm and comfort me. It was at the discovery of those letters, through your dexterous management in changing them, just as the lawyers would have read the humiliating secret, which first showed me how true and loyal a friend you could be, Mr. Yelveton. You know that you will always be a friend of mine, just such a friend as no other person can be, do you not?"

"I know that if I could have died to save you the

pang of that discovery, I would have done so," said he, nervously. "If your quick eye had not seen my seizure of those odious letters from Penhallow's hand and demanded them of me, I should have burnt them, and no one would have been the wiser."

"You are a truefriend. I always have known it. No salary, though it were half my fortune, could procure such management of the estate as you give it. I hope it is a little reward that you are appreciated, Mr. Yelveton."

He raised his eyes to the beautiful face, and dropped them quickly, lost the hungry, passionate love within should be betrayed.

And she, though the scarlet had deepened on her cheek, still smiled calmly.

"No, Mr. Yelveton, I shall never be so suicidal as to send you away. You should manage the estate, though I were married to-morrow."

"I beg your ladyship's pardon," said the agent, in a voice cold, clear, and cutting as ice. "I should leave the very day of your marriage. I will go tomorrow, if you have to-night given your promise to Mr. Wharncliffe."

"So unreasonable and obstinate!" said Lady Fitzgerald; but she did not seem angry. "Well, you will not be obliged to make your arrangements to-night, for I have given no promise to Mr. Wharncliffe or to any one else—as yet."

She turned to look for a file of magazines lying on the table behind her. The movements disclosed a flower which had been fastened in her dress, and it fell to the carpet.

A long mirror, towards which her face was turned, revealed to her the quick seizure which transferred the blossom to a hiding-place in her breast. She caught her breath a little nervously, but made no comment.

Her smile was arch and brilliant as she turned to with the magazine open, her white forefinger on an article.

"See, Mr. Yelveton! Here is something I want you to read. You know I was at a private dinner of Lady B——'s, where all the *literati* were assembled, the other day? They were discussing a series of articles in this magazine, by some unknown author, as evincing an extraordinary degree of vigour and strength. A quotation given set me thinking. I sent for a file, and I've been looking them all over. I endorse their opinion heartily; only a deep thinker could have written them; and while they are singularly free from any approach to ornament of speech or trick of rhetoric, they fascinate the reader like a story or a poem. I am sure you will be interested in them."

She put the open magazine on a table before him, looking full and mischievously into his face.

He glanced at the page, bit his lip, coloured with pleasure as well as surprise, but spoke not a word.

"Mr. Yelveton," said Lady Fitzgerald, triumphantly, "I am almost afraid it is selfish in me to monopolize for Poplar Reach and its petty details the mind that can soar—like this."

"You suspect—you know," stammered he, "and you do not disapprove?"

"Disapprove! I am glad, triumphant, proud! but not surprised. I always knew you were capable of such things," answered she, warmly, half leaning over him, the silken folds of her dress touching his knee, her warm breath just reaching his cheek.

He looked up into her face, and for a moment their eyes met. The two pair of eyes, each trying to hide the secret that was thrilling in every nerve, beating with wild tumult in the heart, pervading, permeating the whole frame.

"Lady Fitzgerald!" exclaimed the agent, his voice quivering.

"Arthur—Arthur Yelveton!" returned the lady, under her breath, her hands outstretched to him, under the best efforts of her impulsive will.

He caught them in his, and kissed them passionately.

"I think I am mad!" he murmured; "but oh, the bliss of such madness! You know, you guess, the idolatrous worship which has followed every look, every movement of yours? Lady Fitzgerald, you do not rebuke me—you return my love?"

One moment, but one moment, and the beautiful head drooped to his shoulder, her fair cheek touching his.

"Let me die now!" murmured Arthur Yelveton, in an ecstasy of happiness.

But the next instant she wrenched herself away, shivering with horror, exclaiming angrily:

"Go, go! I am beside myself. We belong to different spheres. I cannot bear the world's ridicule or scorn. There would be no happiness where pride made such a sacrifice."

"And I would cut off my good right hand, forego my father's honest if humble name, before I would marry a woman who believed she stooped in coming

to me," said he, in sudden accents of indignation.

And taking up his account-book, he walked fiercely from the room.

As the door closed after him, Lady Fitzgerald sank into the easy-chair, all the colour fading out of her face. She wrung her hands slowly, trembling from head to foot.

"Oh, this vile, vile pride of mine! The conflict will wear me out at last. I love him, I love him. He is a king, a hero, a demi-god in my eyes, and yet I turn away from the blindest peace his love would give me! Why, poor, miserable heart, why? Because I am Lady Fitzgerald, and he, though in intellect, education, and physical endowment, one of nature's noblemen, is only the son of a working man. Oh, how I loathe myself that I cannot break asunder from these foolish, wicked bonds of caste! But I cannot, I know I cannot. What shall I do? It is a temptation to marry Anson Wharncliffe, who is agreeable to me, and a gentleman, though without fortune. It would put an end to the strife; for this wild love is consuming all my energy. Why did I send for him to-night, to betray myself in this humiliating manner? And yet I am proud to know he will take no advantage of it. He is so good, so chivalrous! How my heart fluttered when they praised his writings. I knew them so quickly. What a shining light he might become, lifted to the position I occupy. Ah, but a woman cannot raise her husband. If there be a difference, she must descend to him. Aburd, preposterous, and yet inexcusable!"

She spoke these words in a low, impetuous tone, and looked around her with a bitter smile.

"It is a pity Anson Wharncliffe could not be aware of this mood," she muttered again, with her red lip curling sarcastically. "I am reckless enough now to accept the proposal he is so anxious to lay before me."

And then she rose, and began pacing the room slowly and thoughtfully.

"I will go and see Dicky!" exclaimed she, restlessly, and hurried out of the room. Crossing the richly-carpeted hall, and mounting the staircase, whose elaborate carvings were a century old, she passed lightly to the nursery, still littered with its pretty toys, and motioning back the attendant there, she passed on into the chamber opening between the nursery and her own room.

A soft light from a shaded lamp, hanging by gilded chains from the stucco rosette in the ceiling, showed her the pretty picture.

Dicky was fast asleep, one tiny hand still clutching the lace curtains, which dropped their misty folds from the beak of an exquisitely carved ivory dove perched on the gilded rod. The pillows on which the fair head reclined were edged with costly lace, the counterpane was of blue satin. Even the night dress had its tiny ruffles at the throat and wrist, buttoned with gold studs.

The room was a gem in itself. The walls carefully hung with pale blue, with gilded vines creeping along the ceiling. Charming pictures, masterpieces by famous artists, of angel faces, of garden scenes, birds, poultry, childish games, crowded the walls, and furnished the waking eye of the little heir with many gladsome suggestions.

Lady Fitzgerald heeded none of these things. She drew away the lace curtain still farther, and sinking down upon the cushion by the bedside, slipped her hand under the moist little palm; closing her fingers almost fiercely over it, and resting her head against the pillow, sat there watching the little sleeper. Once she bent down anxiously and listened to his breathing.

"There is still that little catch," she murmured, "with all our care he has not outgrown his early feebleness!"

Then burying her face in the pillow, with a burst of tears, she added, imploredly:

"Oh, Dicky, Dicky! you must grow strong and well. You must never die and leave your mother here. You are all she has, Dicky, all she can have!"

At the sound of her voice, the nurse came in, and Lady Fitzgerald arose.

"Has Dr. Arnold examined him lately, nurse? It seems to me that affection of the heart is very plain still. You must call him in to-morrow."

"Indeed, my lady, I think he is doing nicely. That strengthening elixir has done wonders."

"If it will only be permanent," sighed Lady Fitzgerald.

And then, bending down, she kissed the little sleeper with passionate fervour.

"Good-night, my darling! Good-night, little Dicky!" murmured she, turning reluctantly away, and leaving her own door ajar, that she herself might hear the slightest stir, although the nurse slept in the child's room.

This was the heir of Poplar Beach. But beyond—in the little hamlet over the common—in Dame Higginson's cottage, on the miserable straw mattress, thrown upon the hard floor, slept a child with a wasting fever already in her veins, the thin, bloodless limbs making those of little Dicky seem plump and round, and only the poor wanderer, with the two shillings in his pocket, had care whether she lived or died. Poor little Lily! Fortunate Dick!

CHAPTER IV.

GASTON awoke feeling a soft little hand stealing timidly across his forehead, and opening his eyes with a sudden start, there was Lily standing beside him, pale and languid, but with a quiet happiness in her smile.

"If you please, sir, the breakfast is ready, and she don't like to wait."

"She? Oh, yes, I remember now! I forgot where I was, because in my dreams I was in a far different place. Well, I will come, but tell me where I shall find water? for I think a bath is as good as a breakfast, in some cases."

Lily took his hand as she led the way to the spring.

"I was dreaming, too," she said, "and oh, when I first woke up, I was frightened enough. But I came here and saw you, and then I knew it was all true. I can't tell you, uncle, how glad I was to see you here."

"Dear little thing! You and I are going to love each other so well we won't mind other troubles, will we?" said he, smiling upon her.

And, hand in hand, they went back to the house. Bill Higginson eyed his guest suspiciously, although he bent his head as a rough sort of salutation.

"Good-morning, sir," said Gaston, cheerfully.

"Good-morning," he replied, "that is, if there's much good in it for you, which don't look likely, with that sickly young one on your hands."

"I wish there might be no worse ill than Lily," answered Gaston, pressing the child closer. "How won't your meeting? You work in the mills, your dame tells me, and are on a strike now."

"And mean to keep on it, too, till them rich men find out other folks have rights as well as they," returned Higginson, in a surly tone.

"Are the mills stopped?" asked Gaston, in a tone of keen interest.

A look of rage passed over the man's sulky face.

"No, there's a miserable set they've brought down from the other shire, poor creatures, willing to gnaw at any bone flung to them, but we mean that they shall find the place too hot for them. They won't stay long."

"Isn't that rather hard, comrade? Supposing the poor fellows work for half wages, rather than starve?"

"Bosh! They needn't come here taking the bread out of our mouths."

"But it was you yourselves who put the bread away," persisted Gaston.

"Look here. Perhaps you're thinking of offering yourself there," exclaimed Bill Higginson, suspiciously.

"If I don't find anything better I certainly shall," replied Gaston. "Lily and I must have a living somehow, mustn't we, Lily?"

Bill Higginson brought his burly fist down upon the table with a fierceness which made the earthenware clatter.

"You'll find it the hardest road you ever travelled, I can tell you that."

"I've fought my way over some rather rough places," said Gaston, carelessly, "and if I won't knuckle to the rich folks, I'm pretty sure I shan't to those of my own sort. Come, child, you must eat a hearty breakfast. By your leave, dame, I'll take her bread and butter in my pocket. She'll gain her appetite after we've walked awhile."

And as he spoke, Gaston took the untouched slice of bread and put it into his pocket, and then moved back from the table. Bill sat glowering at him.

"Which way are you travelling?" asked he, presently.

"To the other side of the town, if so be there's work to be found there. I shan't try your factory until I have tried there, and failed. Now, dame, the clothes and a warm shawl."

Dame Higginson brought an old tattered blanket, and a dress, if anything poorer than the one Lily wore.

Gaston looked at them a moment, without speaking. He was thinking of the velvet jacket, gold buttons, and dainty trimmings of the little boy he had seen the night before in the luxuriant room at Poplar Beach.

"Well," said he, "it's the best you can do, I suppose. There is the sovereign."

He tossed her over the money, tied a handkerchief

over the child's head in awkward tenderness, took her by the hand, and moved to the door. At the threshold he turned, feeling the little cold fingers trembling in his.

"Say good-by, Lily," said he.

"Good-by, Mrs. Higginson," said Lily.

And they walked away, off into the early freshness of the drowsy morning. The birds were singing merrily; from the pasture lands below, belonging to the great house, came the lowing of the cattle. The factory bell was just sending its noisy summons abroad, and somehow the sound did not seem discordant.

"It is a beautiful day, isn't it?" said Lily, timidly, glancing up into the grave face above her.

"You are not sorry, darling, nor afraid?" he asked, holding closer the wee thin hand.

"Oh, no, uncle! I'm so happy, everything is beautiful!"

"Bless your innocent little heart. You shall be happy if only I can find work to do, just enough to keep that little mouth in bread and butter, you know, and then, pretty soon, we'll have a nice pretty frock, and shiny shoes on these little bare feet. It's lucky it's summer, isn't it, Lily?"

The child's soft blue eyes glistened.

"I shall be as happy as the day is long," she said, emphatically. "It is so nice not to be afraid of scoldings or whippings."

"Whippings! You don't mean she ever whipped you, child?" cried out he, indignantly.

Lily glanced behind her with a slight shudder, as she said meekly:

"It's no matter now, uncle."

"Brute!" ejaculated Gaston. "I've a mind to go back and get that sovereign away. It would buy you a dress, a pair of shoes, and some nice cake besides."

"Oh no, don't. I don't care for the dress, or the shoes. And I don't want any cake. I don't feel hungry now, as I used to do," said the child. "I'm best with you. It's so pleasant to run along; the ground feels cool to my feet, and I am all the time thinking how I have got somebody at last belonging to me."

Her new protector looked down upon her with an uneasy expression in his eyes.

"Is that why you like me, because you think I am your mother's brother?" asked he, suddenly.

"Yes, and because you are so good to me," answered Lily.

He turned around suddenly, and dropped her hand.

"Lily," said he, "I cheated them, because it was not their business, and I wanted some show of authority for taking you. But I mean to be fair and honest with you; there shall be no mystery between us. I am not your mother's brother, and Gaston died years ago."

Lily stood still, looking at him, the tears beginning to flow. She was precocious beyond her years, which were eight in number—and she understood him thoroughly. It wrenched away from her the greatest charm she had found from his kindness, that it was her right, and belonged to her.

"Oh dear!" said Lily, sighing as if her heart would break.

"Child, child," broke in the man, pitifully, "I loved your mother better than twenty brothers could have done, and I will love you, and care for you as if I were your father."

Lily looked at him for a moment, and then sprang forward, all her loving, forlorn little heart shining in her eyes.

"It will be just the same, or a little better. I'll love you for yourself, and because you loved my mother."

He folded her close, kissing her again and again.

"And you will call me Uncle Gaston, just the same?"

"Yes, Uncle Gaston."

And this compact made, they trotted on once more, hand in hand.

Lily prattled cheerfully, and the novelty and excitement really lent her strength. But presently her feet grew heavy, and her head ached. She was, as I have said before, a grave, precocious child, and her hard life had developed her faculties still more acutely.

She did her best to prevent her companion from perceiving her weariness, and he was so entirely unfamiliar with childhood, that he took no heed, until she suddenly dropped down, pale and weary, nearly fainting.

He caught her up in consternation, and ran as fast as he could to a brook he could see rippling along through a pasture, on the other side of the fence. He laid her down on the soft grass, sprinkled her face and moistened her lips, and when she had revived enough to say she was better, he dabbed her little dusty feet in the water.

"Oh, that is so beautiful!" said Lily, doing her best to make the pale lips smile playfully.

"You did not have any breakfast. I can't allow that again," said he, and he pulled out the bread from his pocket.

She nibbled a little piecemeal and slipped the rest into her pocket.

Her guardian was growing a little wiser; he said nothing, but he noted the black circles under her eyes, and the lips into which the colour would not return. When they were ready to start again, he stooped down and took her into his arms.

"You are not going to cheat me any more, Lily. Why didn't you say the walking was too much for you?"

"Oh, no, you mustn't carry me. That would be too much."

"Too much, a feather like you, in my great stout arms. I shall retract my promise not to scold. Do you think I can afford to lose my little girl now I have found her?"

Lily put her two arms around his neck and gave him a silent embrace. Her heart was too full for speech. And then, with a sigh of relief, she nestled her head against his broad shoulder, and resigned herself to be carried.

He walked along bravely, but at the first comfortable-looking farmhouse he stopped, and asked for a draught of milk. The woman who answered his summons was moved to compassion by the child's pale face, and not only refused to accept the money he offered, but gave them a warm meal, which was no slight relief to the two solitary shillings in his pocket.

"Your little girl don't look fit for such a rough journey," said she.

"You don't think there's much the matter, do you?" inquired the man, anxiously, as he smoothed down the golden curls with his broad, horny fingers.

The woman looked into the pale face, at the thin transparent hands, and shook her head.

"You wouldn't take me here on the farm, would you?" asked Gaston, with sudden eagerness. "I'll work from daylight till sundown, and do my best, for her board and mine, for a few weeks at least."

"Oh no, my husband never takes strangers. Besides, he has all the hands he needs."

He sighed heavily, and taking up his charge, after a fervent "heaven bless you!" walked slowly away. He called at every house after that asking for work, but one and all, after learning the terms, glanced at the child's drooping figure and declined. If his heart were full of bitter curses, he allowed no sign of it to appear on his face, or in his voice. By nightfall, he needed his two shillings to obtain a bed for her to sleep upon. A gleam of hope came into his face, as he put her into the clean bed in a carter's humble home. Her eyes were bright, and clear, and a beautiful red gathered on her pale cheek.

"You're better, my darling," said Gaston; "this nice bed will bring back your strength, and you'll be all right in the morning. Now you must sleep your best."

"Give me some water first," said Lily, and she drank with feverish eagerness.

Gaston left her and went out, walking two miles along the road, from a faint hope that a farmer the carter recommended would take them for his work. He came back from the fruitless errand, gloomy and indignant. Lily's eyes were wider and brighter than ever.

"Oh child, are you awake?" he said, in tender reproach.

"I couldn't help it. I tried not to be awake, but I am resting."

In the morning her eyes were dull, and her cheek pale again. He took her in his arms with a vague, but increasing foreboding. The carter was poor, and his wife was parsimonious in spirit; they took the two shillings, and, with the drooping child in his arms, he started on his journey penniless.

He was thankful that Lily was less talkative than on the previous day. She seemed to doze and sleep most of the time. The sun, too, was scorching, and the roads dusty. He did not pause, except at some wayside brook to moisten the parched lips, and dabble the little hot feet in the water. At these times Lily would rouse up, and smile upon him, say how beautiful the water seemed, that she was glad she had some one to love her now, and then sink back into her doze.

Unskilled as he was, Gaston became aware now that the child was seriously ill. He saw how dry and feverish her skin was; how the pulse leaped at times, and then died out; how hurried and painful was the breathing. Indeed her illness grew upon her so rapidly, that the blindest observer could not have failed to perceive it. But when at last she opened her eyes, stared blankly in his face, and cried out wildly that Dame Higginson was going to whip her, he sat down and burst into tears.

"Oh, pitiful heaven!" he cried, looking up appealingly into the sky, "have I presumed too far? Are you no longer guiding me?"

He had turned into a shady lane, whose cool look invited him out of the glare of the sun. He would rest a little, he said, before proceeding to the town, whose cathedral dome showed clear and distinct against the sky.

There were vague and indefinite plans in his head. If he could find no physician to take her in charge, he must hunt up a hospital, even a workhouse. But he ground his teeth at the very thought. And if all failed him there was a last desperate resource. And his hand crept to the dagger with the clumsy wooden handle, the dagger that never left him night nor day.

(To be continued.)

MARY ORME.

"He is very rich and very good-looking, Amy," said Mrs. Lawrence. "You can't do better than try to captivate him. I give you full leave as far as I am concerned."

"Thank you," I responded, smiling; "but are you sure he is at liberty? Has not such a prize been secured by some one before now?"

"I think not; indeed, I am quite sure of it. You have only to go in and win."

I made no objection, though this kind of conversation did not really please me; it hardly coincided with my ideas of delicacy. Not very consistent, you may say, since I was not too delicate to think about it. But, then, who ever is consistent? I did not pretend to be. I thought a good deal about Mr. Otis for the next three or four days; wondered what his own style might be, and what he preferred in women. Perhaps he liked blondes best. No matter. I had tolerable confidence in my own ability to teach him to admire brunettes.

He came at last, and Mrs. Lawrence gave a party in his honour. She was always giving parties, if she could find any excuse for one; a temper of mind that, you may imagine, made her popular with the young folks of the neighbourhood. I wore my prettiest dress, and looked well enough; so, at least, the mirror said when I consulted it; and no eyes that met mine spoke any contradiction. I went down stairs a little excited, though outwardly serene. It seemed as if the meeting Mr. Otis might be a turning-point in my fate.

So much we know of what is going to happen, I forgot his very existence in five minutes.

He had not come alone; a friend had accompanied him, Mr. Lorimer. I could have told him, had he asked advice of me, that it was very poor policy to be accompanied by a person so much more attractive than himself. If Mr. Otis were good-looking, Mr. Lorimer was superb. Just the tall, stately form, the deep, dark eyes, the broad, white brow, with which girls fit out a hero of romance.

He was introduced; we talked together. Of what, do you ask? I don't know, indeed. Of anything that occurred—the weather, the place, the company. He was not the kind of man to diverge into side-paths of sentiment or poetry. Yet some people can give a charm to common-place subjects; some eyes, some voices, have poetry in their very glance and tone, no matter what they say. That sounds fanciful, perhaps—but let it stand. It is true, in my experience.

The evening passed, and I went home; my mother was sitting up for me, as usual. I told her there was never such a delightful party. She asked in what it differed from our ordinary gatherings. I could not say; there were music and dancing, as usual; only it happened to be so very pleasant! Being a housekeeper, she inquired about refreshments. Did we have ice-cream, and was the cake made at home, or ordered from the town? Oh! we had ice-cream, of course, I said; no, I wasn't certain—but it was probable, was it not? Mrs. Lawrence always had it. As for the cake, I couldn't say; I really did not notice.

Mother looked surprised, but made no comment. "And how did you like this cousin," she asked; "this Mr. Otis, that we have heard so much of?" I did not know; I had hardly seen him. We were introduced, I believed, but that was all. "But can tell you of an acquaintance that I did make, mother—Mr. Lorimer." I paused, and did not care to expatiate upon the subject.

My mother gave a slight smile, and then looked grave. "You found him agreeable, I suppose," she said. "Yes," I answered, "very much so." I was ashamed of the colour that I felt creeping and tingling up into my cheeks. "I hope you will think the same," I added, with an effort. "He asked if he might call to-morrow, and I said, 'yes.' As it was late, I bade him good-night."

Why could not the evening end as it began? Why must one be obliged to stop and think, instead of floating on in pure enjoyment? Who was Mr. Lorimer? and would it do to find him so delightful? What has become of all my fancies about Mr. Otis? How immeasurably insignificant did the man appear, who had filled so large a space in my plans that very morning. I was a little frightened. I said to myself, "You must be careful. You know you can't marry a poor man, however enchanting he may be." Why, you ask? Because I had long before decided that I had seen enough of poverty. It had been an inmate of our dwelling from my earliest remembrance. We belonged, indeed, to the gentry of the place, if you will not laugh at me for speaking so about a little country-town; but no one else was, or appeared to be, so limited.

We had shelter, food, and clothing, to be sure; but everywhere, in everything, we stopped short of what was pleasant; the plainest necessities were all we could accomplish. I sighed for something that should embellish life; I hoped one day to achieve it—for I thought I held the golden key that would unlock all treasures, and leave me to enrich myself at will. I was handsome, and knew it. It is so long ago that there is no harm in speaking of it now. My olive cheek mantled with a rose-red flush; my profile might have been copied for a cameo; large, lustrous eyes, dark, shining hair lit up and framed my beauty. This was my capital; I meant to make the most of it. Not that I ever thought of marrying for money; no, indeed! Oh! the arrogance of youth! I was to have everything; love and splendour, hearts-ease and luxury. All would come in time; but meanwhile it would never do to find a poor man charming!

I made a sort of compromise with myself. I knew nothing of Mr. Lorimer, had never heard his name before: for ought I could tell he was a millionaire. I must inform myself. He might prove as eligible as he was agreeable. If not—I must avoid him.

This does not look very pleasant, written down in black and white; but so I settled it. Having thus arranged for future prudence, I was at liberty to recall the evening's happiness, to dwell on certain glances, to wonder if such and such remarks had any special meaning, or were at the service of any lady Mr. Lorimer encountered.

There was soon an end to dreaming. Breakfast was hardly over the next day when Mary Orme came in. She was just the one to tell me all I wished to know—a girl that heard everything, and repeated it as fast as she heard it. She rallied me on being so "taken up," as she expressed it, at the party, and neglecting the lion of the evening.

"Why should not Mr. Lorimer be as much a lion as the other?" I inquired.

"He is good looking," she admitted, "not that I admire him as I do Mr. Otis. I always prefer fair men. But one is rich, and the other poor. It's a choice between a mansion and a garret. Oh, you need not look so vexed! Perhaps not a garret exactly, but very plain doings indeed. Mrs. Lawrence told me about him. He is a young lawyer, just getting into practice; very promising, and all that. But, bless me! how many promising young lawyers there are that one never hears of a second time! Not that I suppose it would make any difference to you—you're such a romantic thing!"

"I wish you would choose your words a little better," I said, not half as savagely as I felt. "What have you ever seen in me of the moonstruck, maudlin sort, that you should apply such an epithet to me?"

"Take care that you don't justify it, that's all," she said, nodding with a look of wisdom. Then my mother came in, and the conversation changed.

"Justify it, indeed! Of course, I wasn't going to do that. When Mr. Lorimer called, I tried to be extremely cool and self-possessed. I must be on my guard against that happy outflow of spirits, that careless yielding to the impulse of the hour, which had made last night so pleasant. Yet I was glad to see him—glad and flattered. At one moment I behaved too coldly; that would never do; rudeness was inexcusable. In trying to avoid it, I passed, perhaps, the limit I had set myself. Then my mother, I was sure, would notice anything peculiar; this embarrassed me yet more. I grew impatient for his departure; yet, when he was gone, felt grieved and angry with myself.

I could not go on thus; I had sense enough left to see that. If I had not sufficient self-command to treat him rationally, I must keep out of his way. The next time that we met, I gave the brightest answers to everything he said, but left his society as quickly as I could. It was prudent, doubtless, but not pleasant. However, when the evening ended, I was able to praise my own discretion; and wish, with all my heart, that there was no occasion for it.

A day or two after we had a picnic. We went in boats—a merry party. Mr. Lorimer was very troublesome. It would seem that he liked to be with me, and indulged in the preference, knowing no reason why he should not.

I was unable to avoid him without rudeness, and, perhaps, was not sorry that prudence, for once, must have the go-by. It was such a happy day; I enjoyed it all the more in that it was a stolen pleasure—a something that I must not have again. We spread our table-cloths upon the grass, and set forth the feast; encountered a hundred inconveniences, and made light of all. The meal over, coffee was served.

Mr. Lorimer handed me a fragrant cup, and seated himself at my side.

"Delightful, isn't it?" he said, glancing at the waving tree-tops and bright lake. "What a relish there is in this gipsy freedom, after being pent up for months in brick and mortar!"

"You are rather Bohemian, I fear."

"Not at all. But there is a sort of vagrant instinct that awakens in such scenes; an inheritance from the old days when the race dwelt in tents. Have you never felt it?"

"Never. I should not fancy tent-life in the least."

"Are you sure? Don't you feel the charm of that unfettered, wandering existence? To rise in the morning without the least idea where you shall rest at night; to go forth, impelled by nothing but your own will; to linger or depart from any spot, just as the humour prompts? How different from the hard recurrence of our conventional ways! Life would have no chance to grow stale amidst this frequent change and absolute freedom."

"I doubt your being so free," I said. "You would have to consult the welfare of the herds, and go where they had pasture and water. Bondage at once! And there would be no easy-chairs in the tents—and when dinner-time came, oh! what woful wants you would experience!"

"Perhaps you are right—if we must come down to details."

"That is always my way of looking at things," I said. "I am matter-of-fact, entirely."

"Young ladies often tell us so," he replied; "but, of course, we never believe it. They do not expect that we should."

"Indeed! But I expect it, because it is so."

"Don't!" he said, with a little lazy smile. "A touch of romance is as native to youth and beauty as the bloom is to fruit."

Well—this was surely a good time to declare myself.

"To youth in some circumstances, perhaps," I answered; "not to me. I look at the world in the most prosaic fashion possible."

"Why so?" he asked. "Why do you insist on brushing off the charm so early?"

"Because I am poor. I can't afford it."

"You must be poor, indeed," he said, gravely, "if you cannot afford to indulge in the feelings natural to your years."

This seemed like a rebuke, and vexed me. What right had he to take that tone? "People are different, you know," I replied. "Romance is very pretty, no doubt; but so are some realities. I believe in these last devoutly."

"I congratulate you on your prudence," he said, pointedly; after that I felt a difference in his manner. What had I spoken? Merely nonsense, such as any girl might utter. So I told myself; but I did not mean it, nor did he so understand me.

Thenceforth I had no farther trouble with him. It was hard. I don't think I could have kept on my way had he not aided me so well. Had he followed me about, persisted in attention, I should have been obliged to yield, spite of ever so many resolutions; but I was never tempted. I had felt some twinges of conscience in adopting my plan of operations; I did believe in my heart that Mr. Lorimer was attracted by me, would be pained by my behaviour. I had a sense of guilt, of something like cruelty, in determining to set him aside and think of him no more. I might have spared myself all trouble on that head. His feelings were safe, out of my power to wound. He was attentive to the other girls, especially to Mary Orme. Me he let alone. This was what I had decreed; and surely such a result should have been gratifying; but it did not gratify me. I began to be really spiteful to Mary Orme. I remembered what she had said about admiring Mr. Otis. "Oh, yes!" I thought, "she would call Caliban, with money, handsomer than Apollo without it! Mercenary creature!" Here, conscience aroused, made some unspeakable remarks. I had very little to say, she averred, about anybody being mercenary. Besides, was not Mary now vindicating herself from such aspersions? Did she not show far more interest in Mr. Lorimer than in his

richer friend? This view of the case suited me no better. I am afraid I would rather have had him entrapped, for a time, by a heartless manoeuvre, than have believed her honestly in love with him.

What would I not have given to know his feelings! Mary was a pleasant girl; rather pretty, very clever; and men were so fickle! "Let him go," I said, "if he wants to go—if he can console himself so soon!" Be sure I bitterly reprobad his fickleness.

If he could change with so much ease, it certainly did not become me to mope and pine; particularly as I had taken such pains to bring this very state of things about. And the world stood just where it did before; poverty was just as painful, affluence just as much to be desired, though I had lost sight, in some measure, of the truth. I set myself seriously to captivating Mr. Otis. He was good-looking, as Mary had said, and intelligent. Very well-disposed, too, to be gallant, if one offered him a crumb of encouragement occasionally. Other girls could be interested in him; why should not I, and take the good of it? I tried faithfully. Oh! but it was weary work! He used to stand at my side, chatting and playing with my bouquet, and any looker-on supposed, no doubt, that we found each other exceedingly agreeable; and all the time I hardly knew a word that he was saying. My mind was busy with the one endless theme—does he like her—does she care for him—will it come to anything? I watched them as closely as I could, but arrived at nothing satisfactory. Sometimes I thought one way, sometimes another. I wondered if Mr. Otis likewise had his own little by-play, while he seemed so devoted to me.

I grew pale and thinner with this constant worry. It was bad enough now. But what if we were parted utterly? I began to doubt the wisdom of my stern resolves. Poverty was not so dreadful, after all; there were worse things in the world. My mother was not an unhappy woman, spite of her cares and her privations; and we might not be so very poor,—there was always a hope of rising. Yet, take it at the very worst, could we not bear it together? At that I flushed, half with joy and half with shame.

I fell in love presently with a picture I had conjured for the future. A little house, low-walled and plain, but, ah! so exquisitely neat! Myself, in fresh morning dress and white apron, going about brightening, arranging, beautifying everything for him? Then, at night, the curtains drawn, the lamp shining over books and work; his footstep at the door; the evening at his side, with all the world shut out! What could be more delicious than possibly like this?

But how to realize these charming visions? I had sent him from me; I could not go out of my way to seek him now. Yet might not look or manner convey some signal of relenting? Would he not hail the change with joy? Yes, surely. I went in good heart about my work of reconciliation.

Only disappointment awaited me. I saw with terror that my timid wiles were all unnoticed. He did not or would not understand. We were often thrown together; he neither sought nor avoided me; I had not even his resentment to build upon. His manner betokened nothing but complete indifference.

I took long, restless rambles in those days, and came back wretched from them. One day we chanced to meet. He turned and walked with me, talking rather fitfully.

As happens in such cases, we touched on dangerous themes. One word followed another, till suddenly he stopped and stood in the path before me.

"Amy," he said, seizing my hands in his, "do you love me?"

I trembled from head to foot. I could not speak.

"I love you," he said, "with my whole heart! I cannot go on as we have been lately. You have understood me, I am sure, from the very first night we met. Did you not read my heart when you warned me from you?"

I could not answer in words. But I dreaded to drive him away again. I had long repented of my foolish warning.

I stole a beseeching glance at him, as much as to say, "Spare me!"

"Forgive me, dear," he said. "I am ungenerous to accuse you. I have been to blame. Determined to appear indifferent, I have pretended to admire Mary Orme. Pride, pique, and folly, had almost led me farther—this chance meeting has saved me—I see now I can never love anyone but you."

"I am punished," I said, softly.

"We have both been punished," he answered, gently. "We might have been so happy all this while. I have been devoting myself to a woman, knowing, all along, that there was only a miserable pretence of feeling with either of us. But you, you,

Amy, are different;" and his voice thrilled me. "You could love me, darling—you do!"

He drew me to him, as he spoke, and I did not resist.

I was ready to forgive and forget it all; for had I not been the most to blame? My head fell on his shoulder, and I burst into tears; but they were tears of happiness, nevertheless.

Before we parted, I had told him all. I could not be fully happy till I had made my confession and been forgiven. How I had thought I could give my hand without my heart; how I had been taught to fear poverty; and how, at last, I had found that I did not know myself.

"No, you are too noble," he said. "It is not poverty, however, darling, that I ask you to accept. If I am not as rich as Mr. Otis, I have, at least, a sufficiency."

I was doubly punished. I could not, after all, make the sacrifices for him I had planned; for the "sufficiency" proved to be a handsome fortune. Our marriage, which soon took place, removed me for ever out of the old atmosphere of want and limitation. Luxury surrounded me. My husband's generosity even brightened the old home, and relieved my parents' declining years of many cares. All my early dreams were realized.

Mary Orme married Mr. Otis. She was never in love with Mr. Lorimer, and had accepted his attentions only to make me jealous; there are such women. I am told that she and her husband do not live happily together; but we never meet, and I do not know how much truth there is in the story. His life is irregular, and he is not good to her, it is said.

My husband has risen to fame and eminence. We have everything that earth can afford. I sometimes think I am too happy. Certainly I am more happy than I deserve.

When I think how near I came to losing it all, and making shipwreck, perhaps, of two lives, I shudder, like one who wakes out of sleep, on the edge of a frightful precipice, and realizes that another step would have been fatal.

Yet surely I am not romantic. E. B. R.

MAGAFF THE WISE.

CHAPTER XI.

OFFA, EARL OF DURHAM, arrived at Anwick Castle late at night; and not until old Penda had gained a view of his face through a side wicket, would he open the main wicket to let him in. But the earl was not surprised at this, nor yet surprised by the notes of desolation which greeted him from within.

He met Oswald in the hall, and there, too, he met his daughter; for she had heard his voice and had hastened to greet him. Only one thing thus far had seemed to present itself unexpectedly. Norna assured him that she was very well, and that she had not been ill; and yet she was very pale, and her every look and tone was tinged with a sadness which even his presence had failed to remove. He did not question her then, however, being willing to believe that a spirit of loneliness had brooded over her in that out-of-the-way place, where the companionship to which she had so long been accustomed was cut entirely off.

If the daughter were troubled, so was the father. As they stood together in the small ante-room, whither Offa had repaired to partake of refreshment, and where Norna had gone to wait upon him, he gazed upon her with an uneasy look, and something like a sigh escaped his lips as he turned away. The maiden noticed it, and she would have liked to know its cause; but she dared not ask a question. There was a secret upon her conscience, and while she guarded that, she could not venture far with questions.

The brave, true-hearted girl had no thought of concealing from her father anything which might properly interest him; but she was not quite prepared for the ordeal through which she must pass, when she came to speak with him upon that one theme, before which all others, in the early morning of womanhood, sink into insignificance.

After Norna had gone to her chamber, Offa and Oswald walked together in the lower hall.

"Now, good Oswald," cried the earl, eagerly, "tell me what has happened. I have heard of Edwin's abduction, or of his disappearance; but I have heard none of the particulars, farther than what have been incidentally dropped since I came this evening."

So once more poor Oswald was obliged to tell the story; but he did it cheerfully, for he spoke to one who had a right to know. Offa heard it through, and then walked away to the rear wall and back again.

"That Oswy hath done this thing," he said, "there is no more doubt in my mind, than there is of the existence of such a thing as crime."

"You have just come from York," returned Oswald, laying his hand nervously upon the earl's arm, "and you should have noticed the sight there; can you form any conception of what they have done with our beloved prince? Do you think Oswy would take his life. Would he dare do such a thing?"

"Indeed, Oswald, I cannot guess. I can only hope that Edwin has been removed for the sole purpose of keeping him out of the way, until Sigbert is firmly seated upon the throne."

"Then Oswy does not think of living a great while?"

"No. I have not told you of the king's condition. He is not only upon his death-bed, but the physicians look upon every hour as liable to be his last on earth. In short, he is dying, and my aim is to get out of his way—to get beyond his reach—as speedily as possible. Were it not for this I would remain with you longer."

"But why should you fear him, Offa? What harm could he do to you?"

"You know the law of our land, good Oswald, whereby the king holds a right in the families of the wealthier landed proprietors of the realm. I have the good or the evil fortune—call it which you will—to own a broader territory than any other nobleman in Northumbria; and I also command more retainers than any other, ay, more than any two or three. This morning, Oswy broached the subject, and I found that both he and his son had been making their arrangements, with a view to my direct and speedy acquiescence to their proposition. Sigbert, according to that plan, is to take the Lady Norna for his wife. She will bring more support to the crown than any other maiden in Britain, and he fancies that he has only to command in order to be obeyed."

"But," cried Oswald, "you would not consign your sweet child to the keeping of such as Sigbert."

"Not if I can avoid it, be assured. And for this very reason would I hasten beyond his reach."

"By the powers of heaven, good Offa, this must not be!" exclaimed Oswald, impetuously.

"You forget," replied the earl, "that our laws cannot be broken with impunity. The very compact upon which our kingdom is based gives to our monarch the choice of a wife from among the daughters of his earls. We who have accepted place and power in the realm, must bow to the laws we have ourselves helped to make. You know how Cadwallader violated the law; and we have the result before us."

"It is as you say," confessed the lieutenant, with downcast look; "and you are right in seeking to get beyond the reach of the dying king."

"Ay," added Offa. "Suppose he should conceive the idea of seeing the twain married before he died? He knows Norna is at Anwick, and if the thought should suggest itself, or if his son should suggest it to him, he would send for her at once; and were she here, refusal to comply would be dangerous."

"You are right, Offa; and the quicker you are on your way to Durham the better. I did not think an hour since that I should find myself so soon urging you away from Anwick—and especially at a time when my heart is fairly aching for companionship. But these are dubious times for us of the island, and we know not what impulse to action an hour may bring forth."

"Thank you, good Oswald. I will rest to-night, and on the morrow start for the north; and when our troubles shall have found an end we may meet again."

"You will have plenty of time for rest," said the lieutenant. "Of course, no courier would be likely to arrive here from York before noon, and if you take passage by water, at any time before the middle of the forenoon, you will be in ample season."

Oswald spoke this as they ascended the staircase, and when he had conducted his noble guest to the chamber set apart for his use, he sought his own apartment, where he shut himself in, and gave way to the great grief that had come upon him—a grief which he sought in a measure to hide from others, but which would burst forth when he was alone.

On the following morning, an hour or so after breakfast, Norna came to Oswald, who was walking in the court, and asked him if he would not try and urge her father to remain at Anwick.

"Oh, my soul!" she cried, "I cannot go until I know of Edwin. Perhaps a few words from you, good Oswald, might induce him to change his mind."

"Dear lady," replied the lieutenant, "I spoke with your father on this very subject last night, and the result of our conference was this: he convinced me that he had better go."

"How so, Oswald? I thought you sympathized with me."

"You shall judge of that anon, dear lady. In the first place, do you know why your father is in such haste to return to Durham?"

"No. He has not told me."

"Then listen while I tell you. By one of the fundamental laws of our kingdom—a law framed for the purpose of always giving the crown the privilege of dividing interests with the house next in power to the king—the king can select for his wife the daughter of any one of his earls, and the right is a sacred one. Now, my dear Norna, it so happens that Durham is the broadest estate in Northumbria; and Oswy has demanded of your father your hand for his son—or, he has strongly intimated that he will do so. The king is dying, and your father seeks to escape. Ah! here comes the earl himself. My lord, I was just explaining to our fair lady the cause of your desire to be away from Anwick."

"And does she comprehend?" asked Offa, regarding his daughter with a smile.

"Oh, yes. I comprehend it very well," cried the maiden. "I would rather be put back upon that fearful spot, where Edwin found me on that night of storm and tempest, than be the wife of Oswy's degraded son!"

"And I," added the earl, with deep solemnity, "would sooner see you consigned to that grave of waters, than see you led to the altar by that man's side!"

Norna returned her father a grateful look; and yet there was something lacking to fill up the measure of assurance she needed to make bright with promise the coming time. He would reject one prince—a prince whom she feared and loathed—but would he smile upon the suit of that other prince whom she so fondly trusted and loved? She was thinking thus, when her father continued:

"I know it is saying a hard thing, thus to prefer a fearful death for my child to union with Sigbert; but I know the degraded prince too well. I have been told such things of his life as I would not dare to repeat. Still he possesses certain qualities which will help him towards success. He is reckless and daring, and over the rabble he might exercise much control. But—"

Offa ceased speaking, because at that moment he heard an exclamation from the old porter at the gate; and when he saw that some one had arrived upon the outside, his lips quivered, and he took his daughter by the hand, and drew her towards him.

"Just heaven, grant that Oswy's messengers have not intercepted me?" he ejaculated.

"It cannot be," said Oswald. "They could not have reached Anwick so soon from York. It must be some wayfarer who simply seeks shelter. Or, it may be—What is it my eyes behold?"

Wide open, with a glad shout, old Penda had thrown the wicket, and from beyond came the form of one who brought joy and gladness in his bright and beaming presence.

At first, towards the gate of the keep, the newcomer bent his steps; but when he saw the trio at the angle of the court, he turned that way.

The first to move was Norna. She forgot that there was such a thing in the world as a secret, and, giving token only of the great love that possessed her whole being, she quickly advanced from her father's side, stood a moment like one trembling upon the threshold of Paradise, wondering if the celestial gate will be opened, and then she sank upon the bosom of Edwin of Anwick, and was clasped there with a strength and fervour that might have set at rest for ever all question touching the return of her love.

"Oh, Edwin! Edwin! Heaven give me strength and gratitude for this!"

"Sweet Norna," he answered, holding her there, and bending his head low as he spoke, "of all the hopes that are saved to me with the new life, this is the most holy and precious! Hold me to your heart, Norna, and give me an abiding-place there for ever!"

The earl gazed upon the scene before him, and then turned an inquiring glance towards Oswald; but before the latter could speak, Norna had broken from the embrace of her lover, and now sought the bosom of her parent.

"Oh, father! father! you know it all now! You will not be angry. You will not forbid me. Oh! you will not!"

And she pillow'd her head against his heart, and burst into tears. A moment so, and then, in eager haste, she added:

"Never—never a word before, my father! This is the first and only confession between us. Edwin hath never trespassed."

The cloud which had partially gathered upon Offa's brow was swept away, and, as Edwin turned from the embrace of his old tutor, the earl received

him with open arms and jubilant exclamation; and when our hero saw that the impulsive revealment of the maiden had not chilled his greeting, he was happy beyond measure.

Away to the hall, where half an hour was spent in greeting the happy servants and retainers, and then Oswald led the way to the chief apartment, where Edwin told the story of his adventures, from the time of the coming of the ruffians to his chamber, to his landing that morning upon the shore. He left nothing out that could be of any possible interest, and, during the recital, Offa never once thought of being in haste to leave Anwick.

"We arrived at Garwold Head yesterday," he continued, after having told of sailing back to the English coast, "whence Ethelred hastened away at once towards York, but I waited until to-day in order that I might have company, as I felt it was not safe to travel alone. Tancred and Karl accompanied me within sight of the castle gate, being determined to see me safe thus far; but I could not persuade them to come farther. Tancred promised that at some future time he would visit me, if we both lived, but not now. When I found that all urging was vain, I bade them adieu, and turned with buoyant step to meet those who, I knew, must be anxious to know of my whereabouts."

A silence of some seconds succeeded this recital, which was broken by Oswald, who addressed himself to the earl.

"My lord, what think you of that?"

"I shall carry it to Durham with me," replied Offa, "and there use it as my judgment shall dictate. By my life! it is the most wonderful story I ever heard. It is one of those events that sometimes transpire in this life to lead us to put trust in Providence; for surely there must have been a power at work in Edwin's behalf, above the mere possibilities of earth. Do you not think so, Oswald?"

"Thanks be to heaven, yes!" answered the lieutenant. "My noble Edwin was not only the recipient of heaven's direct bounty, but must there not have been a purpose in the event beyond that? What say you to the thought of a better and happier rule in Northumbria?"

"With all my heart, I say, 'Amen!'" was Offa's quick response. "And to that end will I labour."

"And," added Oswald, hopefully, "if you apply your labour with judgment, there must be much result from it."

"We shall soon see," said the earl. "The safe arrival of our true prince will send me away with a lighter heart, and I shall feel that I have a sure foundation upon which to stand."

With but little farther remark, and that of a general character, he sent Norna away to prepare herself for the journey.

A little later, Edwin found opportunity to address the earl in private.

"My lord," he said, with a perturbation which plainly indicated what was coming, "you have seen the meeting between your daughter and myself, and you can judge if our hearts are in one in love and sympathy. I have never told her of my love; I have never even hinted by a breath that I looked forward with hope to a farther union between us than the union of friendship and mutual esteem. And now, sir, with this burden of outlawry upon me—an outcast and an exile from the land that gave my royal father birth—I would not dare to think of offering her my hand. I would sooner cut that hand from my arm than bring her to share my solitude and disgrace in this far-off place. But, my lord, I may at some time or other be free from this galling state. If the time should come when I can stand proudly up, and claim the rights of the station to which every just law, both human and divine, entitle me, may I not hope that then you will listen to my prayer?"

The earl reached forth and grasped the youth by the hand, and while the warm tears filled his eyes, and trembled upon his drooping lashes, he replied:

"Sir Edwin, your course has been manly and noble; and I am glad that you have refrained from drawing promises from my child; for she, poor thing, feeling only the great love which has so suddenly warmed and enriched her heart, would have refused you nothing which she might in honour have granted. But you may cherish the hope, my boy—hope in both directions—and when you stand entirely relieved from the curse of Oswy's cruel edict, you may look to me for the hand of Norna. And I think, dear Edwin, that I thus give you a conditional promise of a blessing, such as few men are permitted to gain in a wife."

"Before heaven, my lord, you speak the truth," ejaculated Edwin, fervently. "And you have made me the happiest of men. I bless you, sir; and will try and prove worthy of the confidence you repose in me."

When Norna next met her lover, she knew that all was right. Their words of parting were few, and

are the last word was spoken, our hero whispered that he would come to Durham if he could.

"Only have a care," said the earl. "Beware how you give the king opportunity to assassinate you under cover of the law, which he can do if he finds you away from Anwick."

"Oh, have a care," pleaded Norna, in eager tones. "And Edwin promised that he would be cautious and circumspect."

The earl had made all ready to depart, when a commotion at the gate arrested his attention; and when he heard old Penda announce a courier from York, he trembled with apprehension. His first thought was that the king had sent for him; but he was mistaken.

"How now?" demanded Oswald.

For the new-comer was his sworn friend.

"Good Oswald—and you, my lord—the king is dead! Last evening, Ethelred returned from some important mission, and his report—so it is said—had a wondrous effect upon Oswy. The old man lived into the night, dying ere the sun of this day arose."

"Now," cried Offa, with beaming eye, "I shall depart in hopes higher than any I have yet held. Courage, Edwin; and to you, Oswald, I once more say, 'Be wise and cautious.'"

CHAPTER XII.

Of all the kings who ever ruled in Northumbria, Oswy had held the crown the longest; and furthermore, no Briton else had held the imperial sceptre so many years. He had been a hard, cruel man; but he had ruled with an iron hand, holding the people in subjection, and the masses regarded him with awe and veneration. Nobody loved him, and nobody wept when he died; and yet there was much true and deep regret in view of the event, for even the most ignorant of the people believed that the sceptre was to come into the hands of one who had not yet learned how to govern himself. Oswy, dead, was not alone a cause of mourning; but Sigbert, living, was sufficient to cast a deep gloom over the city.

Sigbert saw all this, and he resolved to make an effort to overcome it. He would draw the minds of his people from their dark broodings, and give them stirring entertainment, until the current was changed, and then he could grasp the rod of rule with more freedom.

So great preparations were made for the funeral, and for the space of five days there was feasting and entertainment for all who chose to come, at the expense of the crown. Huge butts of mead were opened in the great square, barrels of beer were set on tap by their side; while wine in pipes, and wine in tubs, was provided for those who chose it. On the fifth day, the body of the dead king was consigned to the tomb, and that night riot and debauchery at the royal palace ran high and rampant.

Towards midnight, Sigbert, who had drunk deeply, and who swayed to and fro with uncertain motion when he attempted to stand, discovered a stranger at the board, and he demanded to know who he was.

The banquet-hall was long and narrow, a single table extending its whole length, and at the upper end was a raised platform for the master of the feast, upon which was also room for two or three honoured guests upon either hand.

On the present occasion there were more than a hundred guests at the table—some of them sitting and some standing, some eating and some drinking; while some were there who had eaten and drunk until they could take no more.

"What ho, there!" shouted the prince, starting to his feet, and gazing down over the length of the table. "What manner of man is he who comes to our feast in such a garb?"

The guests looked, and at the extreme foot of the table, standing upright against the gray wall, was a stalwart form, with hair and beard of snowy whiteness; a robe of sackcloth confined at the waist by a rope, within which were thrust a stout dagger and a wooden crucifix. Up and down the long table this strange presence gazed, seeming to count the rioters, and to estimate the character and standing of each. When he had come, no one, but himself, could tell; and how he had gained admittance was a mystery, unless the guards were inebriated.

"Who is that man?" the reeling prince demanded, closing one eye and brushing his hand across the other, as though his vision were obscured. "Speak, thou unmannerly dog!" he shouted, in a louder key, "who art thou?"

"By the powers of darkness!" cried an old nobleman, who stood low down towards the end of the table. "It is Magaff!"

At the sound of that royal name more of the revellers gained their feet, and looked upon the white-haired man.

"Heavens!" exclaimed another, turning pale with terror; "it is the spirit of Magaff!"

And others, who remembered Oswy's elder brother, were sure that the old monarch had come back to earth.

"Out upon thee for a set of dolts!" yelled Sigbert. "Magaff hath rested in his grave well nigh two-score years. This is some ill-bred intruder who has come hither to fill his empty body with our cheer. Speck, sirrah, and expose thyself!"

The figure slowly raised its hand, and, pointing to the prince, spoke thus:

"Men of Northumbria, an evil day hath come upon you, and an evil spirit broodeth over you. Arise yourselves ere it be too late. Behold the man you would make king. His father's body hath now been consigned to the tomb, and see where he is, and what he doeth. As he treateth the memory of his father, so shall the interests of a kingdom be in his hands. Beware!"

Thus speaking, the dark form glided to the small door close upon his left hand, and there disappeared. With a furious oath Sigbert leaped down from the platform, and rushed towards the point where he had last seen the strange presence; a score or more of the revellers, now somewhat sobered, joined in the pursuit.

Sigbert flourished his drawn sword in his hand, and only wished to set eyes upon the man, that he might run him through.

"He went this way," said one of the party who had stood near to that end of the table. "He must be in one of these apartments."

They searched in every nook and corner, and sharply-questioned every servant; but not a trace of the stranger could they find.

More than half of the party shook their heads, and declared that it was the ghost of the old dead-and-gone king, Magaff.

"Silence!" commanded Sigbert, furiously. "Prate no more of that!"

"But, my lord," urged an old earl, "I knew Magaff very well, and, as I live, I saw him stand there against the wall to-night."

"Death and distraction, man!" retorted the prince, stamping his foot, "what manner of folly hath seized thy weak and shattered mind? Did you ever see such a thing before?"

"No, my lord, never."

"Then, be sure you have not seen it now."

"But," said the earl, "how can you account for the sudden and mysterious disappearance of the figure?"

"Some sentinel was asleep," replied Sigbert, "and the man went out over his senseless body. By my faith, the thing you would have it, is simply ridiculous!"

"And what, think you, my lord prince, could have been the object of the man?"

"He was crazy! He had no object. Or, if he had an object, it was simply to frighten set of inebriated dolts, which, I can swear, he hath accomplished most successfully. But still we must find him. He may be crazy enough to do mischief."

High and low, far and wide, they searched for the strange presence that had come to break up the feast of the prince, but not a trace was to be found.

Of course the feast was broken up, and more than one of the noble guests muttered words which would have added materially to Sigbert's unrest could he have heard them—words significant of a desire to be freed from the influence of the prince who was to rule over them.

As for Sigbert himself, as the fumes of the liquor wore off, he began to regard the event more seriously, and it troubled him more than he was willing to confess. He had much superstition in his composition, and, though he did not believe that he had seen the ghost of his Uncle Magaff, still he fancied there might be something of evil portent in the circumstance.

As the day drew near on which Sigbert was to be crowned king, there were mutterings of rebellion in York. There were stout artisans who whispered of opposition to the coronation of one who had so disgraced his station, and there were men of rank who secretly wished that a better man might be king. But what could they do? Sigbert was ruler now—ruling by right of appointment from his father—for Oswy had left the sceptre in his hands, making him ruler from the moment of his own dissolution; so that the ceremony of coronation was to be only a seal set upon the transaction before the world.

On the very morning succeeding Oswy's death the son had gone to the council-chamber, and there assembled the ministers of the realm for consultation. They knew that Sigbert held the sceptre; and not only that, but they had promised Oswy, ere he died, that they would be true to his son, as they had been to him; so the youth had commenced his

reign at once, wielding the sceptre, but not wearing the crown. However, it was not long to be so. Augustine, the archbishop, had promised that he would crown the new monarch as soon as the eight and twenty days had passed, during which, according to the law of the land, the crown of the Britwulda had to be left upon the tomb of him who had died in the office.

On the day succeeding the interruption of the feast at the banquet-hall, Sigbert made further inquiries: but at length he gave the whole thing up as a senseless piece of mysticism, and tried to forget it. To Ethelred he said:

"I should sooner think the thing emanated from Anwick Isle than anywhere else, if I did not see there being any there with courage enough to execute such a mission. And this reminds me that I must look to this same Anwick Isle. Ethelred, I am not safe while the son of Cadwallader lives. Come; you have observed the things about you, and have walked up and down the city with your eyes and ears open—and now I would have you tell me what you think. Speak plainly, and fear not to offend me by the truth. I know that I have led a free and easy life, and that the ever-righteous ones have turned up their eyes in holy horror while recounting my follies; but what care I for that? I would know how the masses feel—how those hard-handed peasants and smart-browed artisans, who are to form the bone and sinew of rebellion, would take it, if such a thing should ever come."

"My lord," said Ethelred.

"My lord," echoed Sigbert, with more of pain than anger in his tone.

"Pardon, sire. So long have I addressed you like that, that my tongue leaps in advance of my thought. But you know that Ethelred is loyal."

"I think he is," replied the prince; "and if he remains so, he shall never regret it. But go on. You were about to answer the question I had put."

"I was about to say, sire, that you are right in fearing the influence of Edwin of Anwick; and if there be any possible way by which he can be removed, you will be the gainer."

"Ah, do the people speak of him?"

"Not yet, sire. But I know that he is made of such stuff as would please them, and he must be kept out of their way. Should he once gain the public ear, and tell the story of his adventure on board the Danish ship, there is no telling what the result might be. You yourself can judge how deeply he might work upon their sympathy."

"Ay," answered Sigbert, bitterly, "I see the danger. Oh, what a shame that the Dane did not fulfil his contract. That might have removed every obstacle to my complete success. I tell you, Ethelred, I do not feel at ease. I like not the manner in which the archbishop does his work. He might drown me at once, if he would."

"No, no, sire. You forget the law. From moon to moon must the Britwulda's crown rest upon the tomb of the dead monarch."

"But what has the Britwulda's crown to do with the crown of Northumbria? I am not to wear that crown. I am only to be king of Northumbria."

"I cannot explain it, sire. I suppose the archbishop has his own reason."

"My father was crowned within four days of the death of Magaff," said Sigbert.

"Ay," responded Ethelred; "but you must remember two things. If you cannot remember them, I can; first, Magaff was not Britwulda; and secondly, your father forced the archbishop to crown Laurentius as archbishop then, and he yielded to Oswy's stern demand. If you will be advised by me, you will not seek to hasten the day of your coronation; but you will endeavour to put off those things that stand in your way. If I might speak plainly—"

"Now, good Ethelred, you come to the point. I would have you speak plainly. It is the truth I want."

"I fear you do not wish for advice."

"Yes, Ethelred—from you, at this time, I will take all you have to give. I must depend upon you, and you shall have the privilege of advising as much as you please. I can follow your counsel as suits me. Now proceed."

"Then, sire," went on the minister, with a clearer brow, "I can point out those things that are in your way. First, you know full well that Edwin of Anwick must be removed to insure your complete safety; but Edwin of Anwick would not be so dangerous, if you addressed yourself with more promptness and decorum to the proper labours of your office. People know that your time is spent in carousal and debauchery, when it should be employed for the good of the realm. Even the affair of the banquet-hall hath gained circulation among the citizens, and it is openly talked about

at the corners of the streets that we were all intoxicated together, and that the ghost of Magaff came and broke up the revel."

"By the gods! do the curs paze of our royal affairs thus?" cried the prince, in a rage.

"Not only do they, sire; but you cannot prevent it while you give them occasion. I have mentioned this for the purpose of placing you on your guard. If you will be more circumspect until after the coronation, and after the son of Cadwallader is disposed of, you might gain much. There will be time enough for enjoyment, after your throne and crown are more secure."

"Ethelred, I think you are my friend."

"Sire," interposed the minister, with blunt frankness, "if you will but take the trouble to consider, you will see that I am bound to you by the strongest of earthly bonds. Either you or Edwin of Anwick must rule in Northumbria. What think you would be my fate if he should come into power, whose life I sought to destroy—or, at least, whose destruction I urged?"

"You are right, Ethelred. You must be true to me; and, as such, I will trust you. Touching the matter of my conduct, I think I will have a little more care. If possible, I will put on the garb of a saint, and give the people opportunity to point me out to their children, saying, 'My child, be like Sigbert the Saint!' By the holy rood, good Ethelred, but the fancy pleases me. I'faith, I'll try it. And now, to the next point. Sigbert has thrown off his evil ways; and now for this young prince of the Isles. My dear mentor, I have a thought. The Earl of Durham has been at Anwick Castle, and his fair daughter, the Lady Norma—whom, one of these days, I will have for my wife—has spent more than a week beneath that roof."

"More than a month, sire, to my knowledge."

"Then so much the more sure am I of my proposition. Edwin saved the maiden's life at the risk of his own, which is sufficient to insure her love for him. And as for his loving her, that were a sure statement. I think the earl has returned to Durham?"

"Yes, sire. He went on the day following your father's death."

"Then we may set it down as a thing within the bounds of probability that Edwin will ere long be posting off to Durham to see his love. I know something of what lovers of either sex will undergo, under such circumstances. Death is as nothing in the path of such a love as I believe that young man would feel. Those adventurous, reckless spirits are given to deep, strong passions; and when we seek to reach them by that means, we need not fear disappointment."

Ethelred, who possessed considerable knowledge of human nature, smiled within himself at the awkward method of the prince's philosophy; but he made no remark, because on the main point Sigbert had been correct.

"Sire," he said, "you are right. That the young couple became strongly enamoured of each other there can be no mistake; and I have no doubt that Edwin will, ere long, seek to visit the maiden in her northern home."

"If he should do that thing," cried Sigbert, rising from his seat and taking a turn across the apartment, "his fate is sealed. In that event the law gives his life to me. By heaven! that must be our first sphere of work. If we can secure our end in that manner, I would prefer to do so; and if we fail in that—if he do not venture beyond the limits of his island—then we can contrive some method of compassing his destruction at Anwick. It can be easily done in spite of all their precautions. A wandering minstrel, a wayfaring monk, a beggar on the verge of starvation, something, may be contrived to open their gate to a minister of mine; and beyond that a tiny drop of poison, such as the poor monk might carry in a hollow crucifix, would finish the work. Or, in case of farther need, a boat may spring a leak off the island, and the inmates be compelled to seek the hospitality of the house. Oh, there are a hundred ways in which the enemy of a king may be put out of the way."

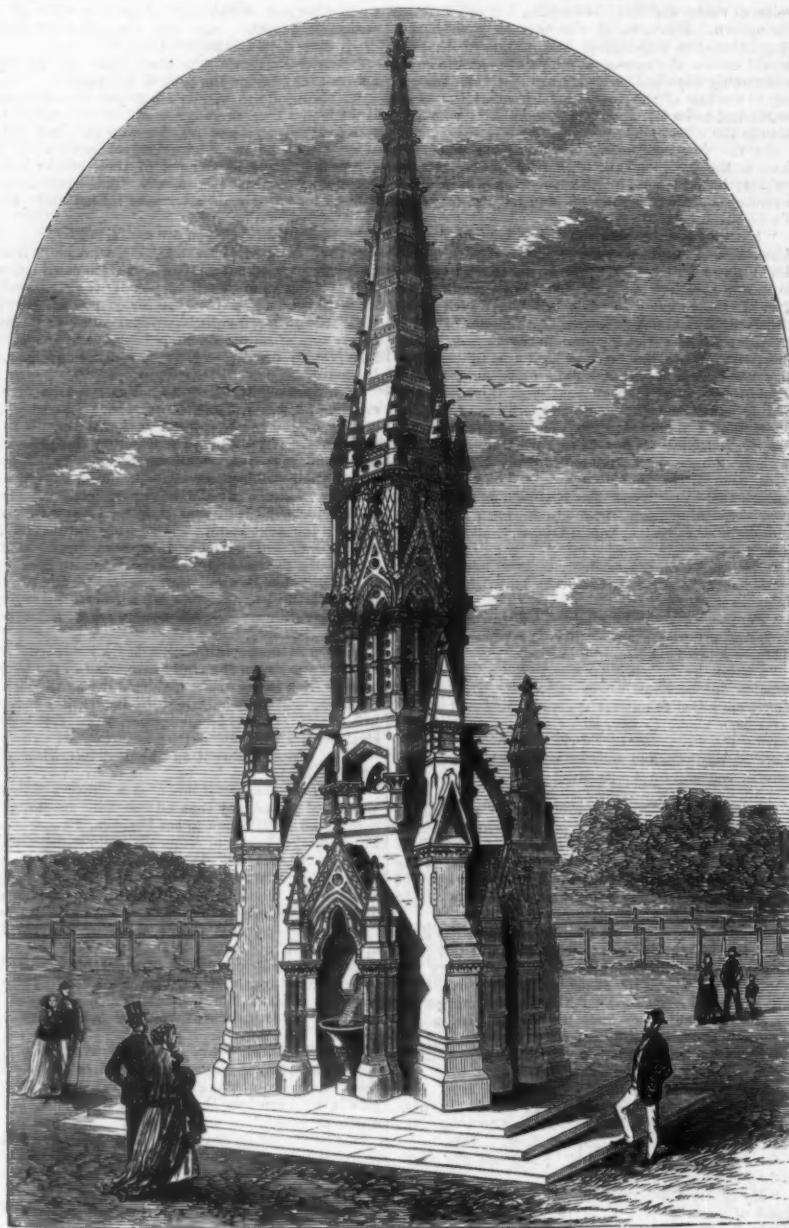
Sigbert took his seat again, and, after a pause, he continued:

"But, first, we will place a watch upon the movements of the young outlaw, to observe if he leave his island. Will you superintend it? Will you take the business in hand, and be responsible for its faithful performance?"

"Yes, sire. If you give me authority, and place men enough at my disposal, I pledge my life that Edwin of Anwick shall not leave his island without your immediate knowledge."

"Good!" exclaimed the prince, smiting his fist upon his thigh as he spoke. "I feel my grasp already tightening upon the life of the only man on earth I absolutely fear."

(To be continued.)



[THE NEW DRINKING FOUNTAIN, HYDE PARK.]

THE NEW DRINKING FOUNTAIN.

THAT benevolence and philanthropy are not confined alone to Europeans and Americans, like that of Miss Burdett Coutts and Mr. Peabody, our Indian fellow subjects have greatly evinced during the last few years. In Debrett's list of baronets and knights companion of the Bath is recorded the name of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, a Parsee merchant, whose almost boundless liberality to the poor, both of his native land and of England, obtained for him from the Queen his hereditary dignity. Far greater perhaps for the future civilization of India than the mere wealth which the Parsee merchant distributed, was the example he set even its princes, of placing confidence in the English rule; for closely following in Sir Jamsetjee's wake comes the Maharajah of Vizianagram, the donor of the magnificent structure of which we this week give a drawing.

Commencing, very properly, his philanthropic projects in his native land, his Highness in 1863 endowed a dispensary at Vizagapatam with 2,000/- for its permanent support. He has also contributed two lacs of rupees (20,000/-) to roads and irrigation, and one lac of rupees to purely philanthropic uses. He has long supported a dispensary and lying-in hospital at Vizianagram, and maintained in that town a school equal in grade to a Government District School.

His Highness was presented with a valuable ring

by Lord Harris (then Governor of Madras), bearing the inscription "Ever Loyal," which motto the Maharajah has adopted, and with good reason is proud of it, especially coming from one so well able to estimate the full value of the distinguished assistance received from the Maharajah in 1857 and 1858. In 1863 in farther acknowledgment of services rendered to the government, the prince was appointed to seats both in the Legislative Councils of Madras and of India.

Since 1863, His Highness has resided principally at Benares—(Holy Benares)—in which city he has evinced his interest by endowing therein a dispensary with 2,000/-, and establishing a scholarship with 30/- per annum, also a gold medal for the best English scholar of the year in the Government College, Benares.

More recently, to show his admiration of our rule in India, and his great interest in English institutions, he has directed his philanthropic efforts to our great metropolis, by the bestowal of a drinking fountain, the history of which is as follows.

Having communicated with the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain Association in 1866, the design was prepared by the architect of the association, Mr. Robert Keirle. This having been submitted to and approved by the Maharajah, the site was chosen near Stanhope Gate, not far from the Marble Arch, and the structure put in process of erection.

The following description of this, perhaps the finest, and certainly the most unique structure of its kind in England, will aid our readers to a full comprehension of the drawing. The landings are of York stone, the general body of selected Bath stone, the bowls of polished red Aberdeen granite, the columns of blue Penant stone. It is 12 ft. square at base, and 46 ft. 6 in. in height from the ground level to the summit of spire final. It is approached by three steps, extending around; there are four bowls and water jets; under each bowl is a galvanized iron grating, let into the landing, and having communication with the drain to carry off split water. In the tympanum of the canopy, over two of the bowls, are the Royal Arms, and in the other two is the before-mentioned motto of the Maharajah, "Ever Loyal," (of course to the Queen,) with an Indian crown, and the symbolic Elephant's Head, which alternate with the Royal Arms; and in the third stage, over the pediment containing their respective arms, are the portraits of Queen Victoria and the Maharajah. Under each portrait of the Queen is the shield of St. George, and under those of the Indian prince a five-pointed star. One item, unfortunately so often forgotten in drinking fountains, is to be found here—namely, a trough for dogs, under the bowl on the north side. Access to the interior of the fountain is had by means of a man-hole. The stone-work was treated with solution of soap and alum, before the scaffolding was struck. The following inscription, engraved upon brass plate by Messrs. Cox & Son, is placed in the bowl alcove on the south side: "This fountain, the gift of the Hon. Maharajah Murza Vijeeram Gujaputty Raj Munca Sooltan Bahadur of Vizianagram, K.C.S.I., was erected by the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain Association, 1867." This elegant structure, it is only fair to add, has been erected by Mr. W. Scale of Walworth, at a cost of 1,200/-.

The ceremony of opening this fountain took place on Saturday, February 29, under the presidency of His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge. A large number of ladies and gentlemen assembled to witness the ceremony, amongst whom were several native gentlemen of India residing in London. There were also present Lord Harris, the Hon. Charles Trevelyan, the Hon. J. Byng, Colonel Macdonald, the Hon. A. Kinnaird, M.P., Mr. Eston, M.P., Lord John Manners, Mr. Samuel Gurney, M.P., the Hon. Frederick Cowper, late First Commissioner of Works; Mr. Joseph Somes, late M.P. for Hull; Sir Stafford Northcote, General Sir Patrick Grant, Dr. Aldis, &c. The ceremony opened by the Archbishop of Canterbury offering up a prayer. After which, Mr. Samuel Gurney, the chairman of the association, presented an address to his Royal Highness, transferring to his Royal Highness as the representative of her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, all right and property in the drinking fountain.

His Royal Highness, in accepting the transfer on behalf of her Majesty, spoke as follows:—"I must say that I think our hearty thanks are due both to the Maharajah, to whom the metropolis is indebted for this handsome fountain, and to those who have carried out his wishes. As regards the object itself, I may observe that this is one of the most social advantages which have been thought desirable and necessary in recent years; and the public at large, particularly in the large towns of the country and in the metropolis, must be much gratified at the expense and trouble bestowed on the erection of this fountain. It is certainly one of the handsomest fountains that we have seen, and the erection of it must tend indirectly to the social benefit of our poorer fellow countrymen. If there be one vice more terrible than another in this world it is that of drunkenness. I do not say that the erection of fountains will put a stop to that vice, but I certainly think that the tendency of such structures is to mitigate the evil, and anything which does that, must be a great public benefit. There is nothing, perhaps, that has produced greater disaster to our species, and the lessening of such an evil, by presenting such agreeable spectacles as that before us, is a cause for general rejoicing."

Lord Harris said he was deputed by the Maharajah to thank his Royal Highness for the honour which he had done him by opening that fountain. He could assure his Royal Highness from personal knowledge that there was not a more deserving prince than the Maharajah to be found in India. He had done his utmost for the improvement of his tenantry and dependents, and when England was sorely tried in relation to India, he showed himself most loyal to British rule. The condescension of his Royal Highness in opening that fountain would, he might add, produce an excellent effect among the natives of India.

The Hon. A. Kinnaird thanked his Royal Highness on behalf of the association for his attendance.

His Royal Highness then stepped forward, and having taken a draught of the water from the marble basin, declared the fountain opened, and took his departure amidst cheers.



[ON THE TRUE SCENT AT LAST.]

THE MISSING MAN.

CHAPTER XIII.

ONE wild, rainy, windy night in March, Evesham Hall was gay with lights and music. It was the anniversary of Bel's birthday, always celebrated in style by the household. Sometimes there was a dinner party, sometimes a ball of the most fashionable character.

Thornton was invited, of course, and as usual he came late. He surrendered his cloak and slouched hat to the footman, and stepped into the library.

"I was so afraid you would not be here," exclaimed a pleasant voice behind him. "I should have been greatly disappointed."

Bel stood in the doorway, attired in a rich crimson silk that became her superbly, and radiant with smiles. There was a flush on her cheeks, too, that more than her words told her pleasure. Thornton went towards her, took her extended hand in his, and laughingly answered:

"No great loss, I fear. But what kind of a confession is this? I really have to thank you for the friendly interest you manifest for me. Do you treat all your friends so kindly?"

"That's not for you to know," she said. "Of course I am friendly with my friends. Come, you shall take me into the drawing-room."

He offered his arm politely, at the same time remarking:

"I appreciate the honour and accept the peril."

"Peril!" exclaimed Bel, as they ascended the broad staircase. "I should like to know what is so perilous in it. You are reading me a riddle."

"No," he responded. "There is indeed peril in your presence, as the envious countenances of those youths in front of us testify. Just look for yourself. How many of their hearts are whole, do you think? And then see Dunfield, how he lowers upon me. He loves you, depend upon it, with his whole soul."

Dunfield was near the head of the stairs, looking down. He thought it was an unusual honour that Bel had conferred on Thornton in going below after him. No wonder his aspect was not particularly cordial. He meant to be polite, but it was rather a strained politeness.

"What nonsense!" she exclaimed, in answer to Thornton's last remark. Nevertheless she did what she was told to do—she looked. She smiled on Dun-

field with unusual kindness as she went by him, and sooth to say, there was an arch coquetry in the smile, that only added to the fire that burned in his heart. As for the other gentlemen, they were apparently overjoyed at Thornton's appearance. No envy there, she thought.

Dunfield was the gayest of the gay that night. The ladies generally had a decided preference for his society, and the fair one who stood only second to Miss Evesham, as the belle of their wide circles of society, Miss Wilson, honoured him more than once with her hand in a quadrille. So, beneath many a fair and calm exterior, like that of John Dunfield, are concealed passions that burn and sear the soul.

Bel's eyes occasionally sought those of Dunfield. She was watching him with deep interest. But every time he caught her gaze he averted his own, and plunged deeper into his flirtations.

Somewhat later in the evening, when Bel was walking to and fro with Thornton, engaged in animated conversation, the latter suddenly remarked:

"Where can Dunfield be? I have not seen him this last half hour. Before that he was ubiquitous."

She glanced across the room, and a slight shadow crossed her face.

"I don't know that it is anything very remarkable," she said. "Perhaps he's tired."

"Tired, no. If you had said so, it would have been more correct. My word for it, he's in the library dreaming of you."

The fact was he saw him go there.

"Of me," returned Bel, in a serious tone. "Oh no, Thornton, I hope not. I am not worthy of such as him."

Thornton looked at her in utter astonishment. Surely he had heard incorrectly. There was a very humble aspect in her thoughtful downward-bent face. A new phase of her existence was dawning on him.

"I hope not," she reiterated. "I would not make him miserable for a great deal. He is too worthy a man to trifle with."

He bit his lip. He was now more piqued than pleased. She had never manifested such an interest in him. He half wished that she had. Charming as she had always been, she now appeared still more so. All the possibilities of his situation came once more thronging thickly on his mind. Surely he could not be deliberating between love in a cottage and the heights of ambition.

"You are very complimentary to the rest of us," he remarked. "Those you do trifle with are not worthy, then. If you think so much of him, why not go and comfort him?"

Bel glanced up quickly. There was a bitter sneer

on Thornton's face, but it faded into a look of admiration, for in her beautiful eyes a depth of womanly feeling was glowing, such as he had never seen there before.

"And why should I not go to him?" asked she. "Next to my father no one is more entitled to my consideration."

In Thornton's countenance appeared annoyance, and the feeling was manifested in his voice:

"Then you had better go, Miss Evesham. I shall be sorry to spare you, but on so good a mission, who can regret your absence? Go; cheer this absent lover and forget your other friends."

With the last words his voice sank to a gentler tone. It was now her turn to show pique, and she did it with a good will. Her eyes flashed, and she drew her hand from his arm, exclaiming:

"I will take your advice, Counsellor Thornton, and give you no thanks for fee."

Before he could fairly comprehend it, she had left his side. He half made an effort to detain her, then with moody brow folded his arms, and watched her rapid progress through the throng and towards the door.

"This wayward beauty should have been my wife," he thought. Immediately his conscience reproached him. Nettie had not been six weeks away, and he was a willing captive to the smiles of another. With a sigh he went to a window, hid himself behind the crimson curtain, and tapped idly on the glass that kept out the beating rain. Who should it be—Bel or Nettie?

CHAPTER XIV.

BEL did indeed find John Dunfield in the library stretched on the couch, and a white handkerchief thrown lightly over his eyes.

She shut the door, went up to him, and drew the handkerchief off. He opened his eyes in surprise, and she enquired, abruptly:

"John, what is the matter with you?"

This mode of address was not new to him. They had dwelt so long beneath the same roof that it seemed almost as if he were a brother—he was at least her father's warmest and best friend. What he should be more than that, she had never for a moment thought.

Dunfield smiled, and raised himself on his elbow:

"I was tired, Bel, and came to rest me. But why have you left your guests? Has any one sent for me?"

She drew a chair close to the couch, and sat down in front of him before she answered.

"Yes, Mr. Thornton sent me to look after you. He said you were unhappy."

A flush crossed Dunfield's face, and a proud look came into his eyes, tinged with a little anger.

"He had better look to himself," he cried. "I want none of his sympathy, and you may tell him so—at least if it suits you."

Bel believed that she understood the feeling manifested. She had read the minds of jealous lovers before. Her reply was:

"John, it does not suit me. I shall tell him no such thing. I have made trouble enough already. But I do not want you to lie there. For my sake come upstairs and be happy."

Dunfield rose to a sitting posture, and vehemently ejaculated:

"Be happy? Bel, be happy? For your sake, what would I not do, but as for being happy, how can I?"

Her soul was wrung with regret and pain. She feared that it was indeed as Thornton had said. Her soft, warm palm was laid on the back of Dunfield's hand, and she said, in an earnest tone:

"I am sorry, John, very sorry. We all want you to be happy. We owe you too much, my father and I, ever to forget your welfare. Only show me how, and I will strive to banish this sadness of yours."

"Bel, Bel," ejaculated Dunfield, "do not speak so. You will drive me mad. I could abide your scro, your coldness, if you gave it me. But this kindness of yours un-^{an}such a subject unmans me. You do not know what trouble you are causing. Oh, leave me, Bel, do leave me."

He hurriedly arose to his feet and crossed the room once or twice.

She turned half round on her chair, and watched him sadly. She almost regretted the possession of her many charms, since they had caused sorrow to this man.

To the other butterflies that had fluttered around her, in the gay parterres of fashion, she had given but little thought. She had not studied beneath the surface, nor learned that human hearts are often trust and best where merit is least suspected. Dunfield she knew well, and warmly appreciated his noble nature.

At last he stopped before her, and said:

"I cannot exist thus any longer. To-night is the last I shall sleep beneath this roof. To-morrow I leave this house, for ever."

Bel was frightened. She stood up and caught his arm, regarding him with alarm and anxiety. Had it come to this then? Was Thornton's assertion true?

"John, you do not mean it. You cannot leave us all alone and go out among strangers. What will my father do? What shall I do without your steady counsel, your steadfast friendship, your pleasant conversation? John, why should you go?"

"Because it is misery to remain here, it is a slow death. I have been making up my mind to it these many months. With so many friends as you have, you will hardly miss me. I did not mean to say it, Bel, but I will tell you now. I would not tell you were I going to remain here. Day by day you have rooted yourself in my heart, and there is left no chance of peace for me but in absence. I know my affection is a hopeless one. Others, with higher social position and a brighter future, have loved you in vain, and so too have I. When I am gone, Bel, I have the vanity to believe that you will regret my absence sometimes. You will remember the pleasant hours we have passed together, and will at least say of me—'He was my friend.'

Dunfield paused a moment to regard Bel. For at his last words he saw the great tears gather in her eyes, and roll down her cheeks. It made his soul yearn within him, but in the very steadiness of her mournful gaze he read his doom. There was no confusion, no bashful down-looking—only sorrow at what he had said.

He could not look on her tears unmoved. Turning, he walked hurriedly from her.

"John," she ejaculated, "I am so sorry. I never tried to make you love me. You know I never did."

"It is true, Bel," he returned, quickly. "I could have resisted your coquettishness. It was because I saw you in your own home, adorned only by your graces, that your charms were so powerful. No matter, it will soon be over, and absence, I hope, will heal the wound."

"You shall not go, John. Dunfield," exclaimed she, with a sudden change of manner. "My father cannot do without you, nor I either. You don't know how much he thinks of you, nor how much he needs you. And now that he is getting old, for you to desert him would be wicked."

Dunfield stopped before her, and said:

"Do you wish me to stay, Bel, for any other reason than that? Would there be a hope for me? Think of it, dear friend. Look at the position I am

placed in here—brought in contact with you every day and evening—and no hope of ever possessing you—burning with a love that can never find fruition. Your own good sense must tell you I am right, Bel. Is there hope of anything better?"

She shivered a little, as if she were cold, and was silent, looking down, with her long eyelashes still wet. She felt that after this there was indeed no alternative for him but to fly from her presence. Oh, the misery she was causing with her fatal gifts of speech, manner, and appearance.

For the first time she began to appreciate the unhappiness her coquettishness must have caused—scores of hearts in the past, and she felt too wicked and too much humbled to speak. She sank down into her chair, and buried her face in her hands.

Just then there was a knock at the door. With a sudden impulse that he could not resist, Dunfield stooped over her.

"One kiss—Bel, forgive me—the first and the last."

She stirred not, only her eyelids drooped, her colour came brighter, and she suffered him to remove her hand and touch her lips with a long and earnest pressure. Then she said as he stepped quietly away from her side, as if it were danger to linger:

"John, no man ever had that favour. Remember, it is a proof of my friendship for you. If it must be so, go, and forget your sad friend, Bel."

The knock was repeated. Dunfield could delay no longer, but he opened the door. There stood Thornton. He, however, did not offer to enter. For an instant the lurid fire of passion flamed from the eyes of Dunfield, for this sight was of all others the most unwelcome to him—this sight of the graceful form and pleasant face of one whom he regarded as his successful rival. Thornton almost expected an attack, so threatening was the aspect of the other; and while he would not have shrinked from any conflict, yet he felt relieved when he beheld Dunfield attempt to resume his usual air of self-control, and hurry away through the long entry. He listened till the echo of Dunfield's feet died away up the back stairs that led into the wing of the mansion.

With instinctive delicacy Thornton waited a little longer before he entered the library. Bel sat there quiet, subdued, flushed, gazing down. He knew that something very serious had transpired, but he was too much of a gentleman to refer to it at that moment. He said courteously:

"Your father is anxious to see you, Miss Evesham. It is time for supper, and the hostess should be there."

She took his offered arm, murmuring—

"Supper! There is none for me. My appetite is gone. Poor John!"

Thornton replied not, but a gleam of satisfaction shone in his eye. He understood her remark perfectly, and derived pleasure from the knowledge it communicated. Ah, fickle man, and did he never ask himself what right he had to feel pleasure, when his vows had been plighted to a fair lady who dwelt now so far away? It is to be feared that the star that went behind the cloud was being rapidly forgotten. Graceful Nettie Parkhurst, did you dream of him at that hour as "faithful and true?"

CHAPTER XV.

THAT was a solemn midnight for John Dunfield. He was firmly resolved on the course he should take. He would on the morrow see Mr. Evesham in the counting-room alone, have a long and serious conversation, and settle the details of departure—or at the least of a change of home.

Dunfield was, however, to find that, though man proposes, he does not always dispose. Events hurried on that were to scatter his arrangements to the winds, and fill with wonder and amazement the minds of many seekers after evil tidings.

When he went upstairs from the library he staid not long. A pair of thick boots, a long cloak and a slouched hat, and out he went into the rain and darkness.

Past midnight, and yet lights were gleaming dimly from a field far up the lane. It was a singular sight, and Dunfield paused and gazed wonderingly in that direction. Glad of anything to divert his distracted and weary mind, he turned his steps towards the lane. Out of the gate, along the street, and over the low stone wall he went, and paused under the shelter of a tree.

Fifty feet distant from him were three men. A chill of horror ran through his veins. Were they digging a grave, or was some awful secret being unearthed with pickaxe and spade? One looked on, holding a lantern, and the other two worked. A second lantern stood on the ground.

"Carefully!" exclaimed he who was superintending. "You have reached it. That hollow sound

tells the story. See, scrape away the soil from the head."

As he spoke he bent over and held his lantern low. The others stopped and looked.

"Great heavens!" murmured Dunfield. "It is Mr. Henley."

The remembrance of that fearful night, when the blood tracks were discovered in the old library, came like a torrent back on his mind; his knees knocked together, and he leaned against a tree for support. Then again he heard the detective's voice.

"We're on the true scent at last. It will not take us long to work up the case after this. There is the body beyond a doubt."

Dunfield knew now what scene was transpiring before him. The detectives, for he knew they were all officers, were bringing to light the mystery of the mansion. It was for him a terrible discovery. But how came the body buried there? That puzzled even him. Those three sombre figures, grouped over an open grave, in the midnight gloom, and amid the storm, formed a perfect tableau.

"Come, Mr. Henley, give us a hand, with this end. Now one pull, and out it comes."

Sergeant Henley bent over it, and examined the clothing, while the others raised the lights the better to aid his examination.

"Here, John," said he. "Hold this watch—a splendid one too, it is. Here is the pocket-book. Let us see. Money in it and papers. Ah, here's the name. George Maxwell—in gilded letters. Boys, this is the man—the clothes, the watch, the hair, the height, the moustache: this is Miss Evesham's jilted lover, at last."

An exclamation of surprise and horror greeted the ears of the three men, and they looked up in astonishment. Above them stood the grim figure of Dunfield, with the slouched hat over his eyes, gazing down at the face of the corpse. They did not know the manager, and even Henley could not get a clear view of him in the darkness.

"Well, who are you?" cried Henley, rising suddenly to his feet, and laying his hand on the shoulder of the new-comer.

With a wild cry Dunfield broke away and fled into the darkness. "It is he! it is he!" came from his agonized lips as he ran, and heedless of the outcries to stop, and of a short but hot pursuit, he continued his headlong course, rushing like a crazy person, he knew not whither. Anything, anything, but the sight of that corpse. One of the officers distanced the rest. He gained close on Dunfield.

"Stop, or I'll shoot you!" was the exclamation that greeted his hearing. Dunfield grew wild with excitement, and flung himself forward headlong.

There was the crack of a pistol. Fortunately for Dunfield at that very moment he stumbled over a log that was lying in the field, and fell down upon the soft mire. The officer was on him before he could rise.

"I have him!" exclaimed his captor. "Henley, bring the lantern."

Dunfield stood still and saw the lights approaching. He was a powerful man, and was collecting his strength for a last desperate effort. Henley drew near, and the gleam of his sharp eyes was visible as he scrutinized his prisoner.

"Well, sir, what brings you here at this hour? Off with the hat."

Dunfield had bent his head a little. The next instant, as Henley raised his hand to pull off the hat, Dunfield wrenched himself from the grasp, held him, flung himself violently on Sergeant Henley and overthrew him, lantern and all, and then was away at once, fleet as a deer, straight for the lane.

"Confound it, shoot him!" exclaimed Henley.

"Fire!"

Three successive shots rang out upon the air, but rather at random were they aimed. Dunfield had a better start this time. An oath escaped Sergeant Henley's lips when he saw his subordinates return without their man.

"This will make bad work for us, boys, if it gets wind before we have finished. That portfolio of notes is not on the body, and I must have it to-night. We'll have to hurry if I am to get there in time."

And so they went back to where they had left the exhausted corpse, gathered it up, and drove off at their utmost speed.

In the Evesham mansion, all this time, the feast went on merrily. The guests were gay, and conversation grew brisk and lively over the well-filled tables. Mr. Evesham sat at the head of the board, and did the honours of the occasion with that dignity and courtesy which marked the sterling gentleman of the old school.

But upstairs, in his very room, there was an unbidden guest.

This unbidden guest, in Mr. Evesham's room, stealing thus unawares into the house, had unlocked drawers with false keys, and rummaged their contents, yet put all things back again as he had found them.

Not a pound had been touched, not a gem removed of all he had seen in bureaus, closets, and trunks.

This was not much for him to do. Henley had done bolder things than this in his day, for less reward than he now sought.

The last thing of all was an old secretary. His false keys had been well prepared, and even the lock of this quaint old-fashioned memento yielded to them.

"If I do not find it here, I am at fault," he murmured. "Ah, I have it. Bill made a good use of his eyes, when he watched through yonder window. This is the portfolio. But the notes—where can they have gone to?"

Henley had opened a drawer in the old secretary, and found there the very thing he was in search of—a portfolio, once to his certain knowledge filled with notes of hand, and now empty—the portfolio of George Maxwell.

"This is the convincing evidence for old Mr. Evesham. Where is the man who would dream of murder in his presence? Good heavens! what will not men do for money? But these notes of hand—he must have destroyed them."

Nevertheless Sergeant Henley began searching the other drawers. Some one came and tried the door handle. The coachman's voice was heard muttering:

"What possessed him to lock his door? How did he think I was to get his boots. No matter, Mary's got the other key. I'll make bold to go and ask her for it."

Henley listened till the coachman's footsteps had died away. Then he hurriedly replaced the dead man's portfolio where he had found it, fastened the secretary, took from his own pocket the key of the bedroom, and glided away along the entries.

And when the coachman came again, he was lost in wonder, but neither he nor his master could tell by the appearance of things that a single article in the apartment had been at all disturbed that night.

CHAPTER XVI.

THORNTON had not heard from Nettie since she left, and he wondered at it. He expected her address in a letter, and besides, having been very busy by day, and very much engaged at night, he had not gone to the cottage to get tidings. No doubt her uncle was still in the land of the living, and Nettie was too much exhausted with watching and grief to take pen in hand. So he had consoled himself, and Bel had added her counter-charms to while away the few spare hours.

When Thornton went to his office the morning after the birthday entertainment, he found a note awaiting him in a lady's handwriting. At once he saw that it was from Nettie. But what did it contain? Strange forebodings came to him which he did not understand. After turning the missive over once or twice, he retired hurriedly to the sanctuary behind the door of green, and broke the seal.

The very first words made his frame thrill as if he had heard his own funeral knell.

"Once Dear Friend—"

A look of sadness came into his dark blue eyes. "Once!" he exclaimed; "once dear. That is, no longer dear. Heavens, what does she mean?" and he read on:

"Once Dear Friend,—Forgive me if I write to you unpleasant tidings. I do not wish to wound your feelings. But it is time the final word should be spoken. My uncle's dying counsels have strengthened my heart to say farewell. You remember I told you once before to go away, but my resolution melted before your loving words. Absence has torn off the veil that obscured my vision. The course that self-respect requires lies clear and straight before me. I shall follow it unhesitatingly, unflinchingly. We have parted, and who can say when we shall meet again? Before you read this I shall be far away, perhaps on the blue waters. I will not reprobate you. I will not even blame you. What this step costs me you will never know. My sorrow shall be only for myself to bear. Wherever I may abide I shall remember kindly all your attentions. I can write no more. It is a task too painful to be prolonged. You need not seek me, for you will do so in vain. Thornton, forgive me and forget me. Dear, dear friend, take the good-bye blessing of your lost, your unhappy friend."

NETTIE."

That was the missive Thornton received.

It was little comfort to him that there was a blistered spot or two, as if tears of grief had fallen on the

letter. He could have wept, if tears were for him. He paced backwards and forwards through the room like madman. It was a terrible blow, and not the less so because he did not fully understand the cause of it. Something there was of suggestion as to the possibilities of the case, but he was too much disturbed to appreciate it. Bel Evesham's star went down suddenly. The worship he had lavished at the shrine of ambition seemed a bitter mockery. The divinity had dropped her attire of purple and gold, and fled, and love stood, armed and mailed to chastise him for his duplicity. This letter of Nettie's was a silver-fringed cloud, but the lightning in its depths had cleared the vapours from his soul, and let him see more plainly than ever before the true state of his heart.

"What shall I do? What shall I do?" he ejaculated. "If I lose her, I am lost."

Then with sudden emphasis he continued:

"No, it shall not be! It will conquer, it shall! This cruel girl shall be mine, even if flood, fire, and friends stand between. John, call a cab!"

He ran into the outer office, and let the door slam violently behind him. The clerk arose in astonishment at this unusual excitement of his chief, and remained looking at him with mouth wide open.

"A cab, do you hear?" reiterated Thornton, impatiently. "Run and call a cab. Don't be gone five minutes."

The clerk fled, as if he was in physical danger. He was not absent a minute. When he returned, Thornton was "booted and spurred and ready to ride." He walked hastily to the door. His clerk spoke up rather loudly.

"But these papers, sir. What shall I do with them?"

He turned round impatiently, and glanced at the pile of documents resting on the green baize covering of the sideboard.

"Confound the papers! What do I care for them? What are they? Speak quickly!"

"Here's the case of Andrew R. Miner, sir—comes on next week."

"That's good for next term. Say I'm ill, anything, if they call. I'll tell you when I come back."

Ere the clerk could interpose another word Thornton was gone.

The young man leaned back in his chair, and gave a prolonged whistle.

"I never saw him so before. Something's the matter with the women, I'll bet a fee. This all comes of having a private letter-box. Some girl's at the bottom of this. I wonder if she knows he's a lawyer?"

Just at this instant, down on the side-walk, Thornton was thrusting a double fare into the cabman's hand, and then he sprang into the vehicle.

"Drive fast," he remarked, as he gave the direction.

The cushions were comfortable enough, but this did him little good. He sat perfectly upright, as if it were he who was driving, and looked first out of this window, and then out of that. Twenty-three minutes—why it seemed almost as many hours—that drive into the suburbs.

When he reached the little brick cottage he went in without the least ceremony, and shut the front door. The parlour—that was cold and cheerless. Its charm was departed. With a violent hand he knocked on the door.

A young woman came.

"Good-morning, Miss Parkhurst—where is she?" he asked, abruptly.

"I cannot tell you, sir," the lady replied. "I do not know."

"Miss Parkhurst, at least you know what part of the country she is in?"

"No, sir. She has gone away from here."

"Gone away! Where? For how long?"

"Well, sir, she will not be back these many months. And, besides, I am not to tell where. Least of all can I tell you."

"Not tell me! You know then?"

"Yes, sir, I do. I am sorry, sir, but indeed I cannot help it. The truth is best. They sent orders not to inform you on any account."

Thornton gave a gesture of impatience. His heart sank within him. Was he never to see his charming pet again? Ah, that was a painful thought!

"See here, my good girl. I must see one or the other. My happiness depends upon it. If you will only help me, you shall have any reward you may ask. See, here is twenty, take it and tell me."

A crimson hue crossed the young woman's face, and a gleam came into her eyes. To tell the truth, she was greatly tempted, but she was also indignant.

"No, sir, you are mistaken in me. I would not betray my trust for all your money, nor for you either. You insult me."

Thornton stood looking at her in surprise and despair. This rebuff was not what he had expected. But he was a man of firm will, and his mind was made up to reach Nettie's eye or ear by some means.

"Then for pity's sake. There has been a misunderstanding. I cannot tell you, but it was my fault. I want to see Nettie again. If you have any sense of compassion in your nature tell me of her, where she is, where she is going."

His earnest, mournful tone touched the girl's heart. Her look grew softer. So what she said was spoken firmly, but gently:

"I cannot tell you, Mr. Thornton. I am sorry that it is not in my power to do so, and be true to my word. I will do this, sir. Perhaps it will not be liked. But if you choose to write, I'll forward your letters. That's the only way I can manage it."

Thornton walked across the room hurriedly several times.

His good sense told him that this young woman could not be bribed. The best he could do was to accept her offer.

Suddenly a ray of light shone into his soul from an unexpected quarter. His face for a moment betrayed the change in his ideas, but he instantly subdued its lively expression. He turned eagerly to the girl, exclaiming:

"I thank you. Oblige me with a sheet of paper, pen, and ink."

The result was that in ten minutes he was writing as if his life depended on his exertions. The associations of the place were full of inspiration, and his most earnest thoughts were rapidly committed to paper.

Resting there in the quiet of that dear parlour, this is what he wrote:

"DEAR NETTIE,—why is this? For ten days I have received no word from you, and now to-day you break my heart with such a letter. For goodness sake, tell me what I have done to merit it. I am as true to you as ever. I cannot understand it. Some foe of mine has been at work—I am certain of it—with tales that are as false as Satan. Let me confront him, whoever he may be. Do not, I plead with you, do not condemn me without a trial. At least let me hear the indictment. The worst offender may have that privilege in law. My brain is fairly on fire with regret and wonder. The other night you sent me away. Now you are going yourself—still worse. And not one solitary sentence to show the reason. Oh, Nettie, do not kill me. If you will not come to me, let me go to you. The ends of the earth will not be too far for my pilgrimage. You are the one bright star of my existence. Life is almost death without you. Justice, mercy, and love, command you to hear my plea. Let me see you again, if it be but for one moment, that I may hear from your own lips the cause of my condemnation. I am worthy of you, in character, heart, and life, and if you will only grant the opportunity, I am confident it can be verified to your satisfaction. Nettie, for pity's sake, for love's sake, let me know where I may find you. Unhappy,

THORNTON."

He read the letter over twice, then looked at his watch. Time was growing precious. He hurriedly folded up the missive, placed it in a blank envelope which he drew from his pocket, and not satisfied with the gum, stamped the back heavily with a seal that depended from his watch guard, and then examined it. There was the impression, clear and distinct, on the wet paper, and he was satisfied.

"I will find her within the hour," he ejaculated, and his lips closed firmly, as if to give full token of the fixed and potent purpose that reigned in his bosom.

He called the young lady, and handed it to her:

"Here is the note. Will you take it at once to the post-office? They may be gone before it reaches them, if you tarry a moment. See, the face of the envelope is blank. You can direct it yourself, and your secret will remain secure. All I ask is, that there shall be no delay. Dare I request this farther favour of you?"

The girl looked at the missive a moment, and then signed her assent. She would put on her shawl and hat this moment.

Evidently she was getting interested in Thornton's behalf.

He thanked her with the warmest terms he could command. He would not detain her, but bid her a grateful farewell.

"There was the pen and ink; would she use them quickly?"

The gentleman went out, and in her sight got into a passing omnibus. Not very far did he ride.

For at the very next corner he dismounted. The chase was not to be given up easily. He was going to prove that he was equal to the occasion.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN Paul Evesham looked forth from his door that morning, the air was so pure, the sunlight so clear, and all nature so full of grace, that he felt inspired with new vigour, and chose to dismiss his carriage and walk to his banking-house. Thus it was that the steeds went back to their stables, and the coachman to his cosy nook by the kitchen fire, and the noble, good-hearted gentleman started off alone and on foot, for the haunts of commercial enterprise.

Paul Evesham little imagined that through all the sunshine there were lurid lightnings of dishonour and disgrace flashing to and fro, burning for the hour when they should fall with merciless force upon the name and fame of the ancient and honourable house of Evesham and Co., bankers and brokers.

"Will you allow me a word with you, Mr. Evesham?" said a familiar voice. The gentleman turned, and beheld by his side Sergeant Henley. At first the face of Mr. Evesham lighted up with pleasure, but when he saw the serious air and manner of Henley, his countenance fell on the instant, and he manifested not a little anxiety.

"What have you to say, Mr. Evesham, is very important, and vitally concerns yourself."

"Concerns me, Mr. Henley?" exclaimed Mr. Evesham, in a tone of surprise. Then changing his tone, he continued: "Ah, I see; something about that frightful mystery. You have discovered a clue to it at last."

"You are correct; I have. But what is to be said cannot be said here. I shall have to ask you to accompany me to head-quarters."

The solemnity with which Henley spoke induced Mr. Evesham to stop abruptly, and gaze inquiringly at him. There was withal a trace of alarm that did not escape the keen eye of the officer. A cab was hurrying past at this moment. The officer, without a word of apology, hailed it, and asked Mr. Evesham to get in. They would arrive much quicker at the office, he said.

"What has happened?" asked the banker, as he entered the carriage. "Something out of the usual way, evidently. Are there any remarkable developments in the case? Have you arrested anyone?"

Sergeant Henley turned suddenly on the old gentleman, with an eye like that of an eagle, and exclaimed in a meaning tone:

"Have you heard of Dunfield's escape?"

The old gentleman looked aghast, and stared in astonishment at Henley. In a moment, he found voice to reply:

"Escaped! Dunfield! What has he escaped from, pray? Do you charge him with murder?"

"I do," replied Henley. "He is one of three guilty men. The body has been found, and all has been brought to light. I have orders for the arrest of each of the parties."

"I am filled with horror!" exclaimed the banker. "Good heavens! Dunfield a murderer, and fled. There is no mistake. He has escaped, proof positive. And his companions in crime are known."

Mr. Evesham's face became pale as a sheet of paper, and he leaned back in the corner of the carriage, and seemed to gasp for breath. Henley sprang to the window and opened it. The cool, fresh air revived Mr. Evesham, and pressing both hands over his eyes, like one bereft of reason, he seemed to be striving to hide from view some fearful vision.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

ARRANGEMENTS have been made for taking observations of the total eclipse of the sun in August next. The Royal Society has sent out to India a number of astronomical instruments, including spectrometers, prisms, and actinometers. Mysore has been fixed upon as the place of observation. Mr. Henessey and Lieutenant Herschel, of the Survey, are to superintend the observations.

THE DURABILITY OF ARMOUR-PLATED VESSELS.—The armoured iron-built frigate Resistance, 3,710 tons, 600 horse power, just taken into the steam basin at Portsmouth for repairs and a thorough refit, offers an opportunity for obtaining reliable data relative to the fastening of armour-plating on the sides of our ships of war, and the condition of the teak backing behind the armour-plates, that is possibly worth some serious consideration. The Resistance is one of our earliest ironclads, commenced at the same time and at the same place—the Victoria Docks—as that of the Warrior, and she has therefore carried her armour as long as any of our ships, and, moreover, has been kept in a long commission and been on foreign service. When our armoured

ships were placed in dock on their return from their first and experimental Channel cruising, it will be remembered that there was a good deal said about the "weeping" of discoloured water from between the lower edges of the lower tiers of armour-plates; the acid of the teak acting upon the iron, the wasting of the bolts, and the loosening of the plates. Our apprehensions have been very materially modified on all these points since that time, but still no steps have ever been taken to obtain undeniable evidence in the matter, and the Resistance is being now about to be partially pulled to pieces, to enable her to receive the new style of armament in the course of her repairs and refit, it seems, as we have observed, a fitting opportunity for learning all we want to know on the subject. Let a section of the ship's plating in the centre of one midship square—say four or five plates—be unbolted and taken off her side, and a full examination made into the present condition of the bolts on which the plates hang on the ship's side, and of the teak backing and its iron ribwork which supports them, or rather which would have to support them if struck by an enemy's shot.

ARTIFICIAL MEEBSCHAUM.

Vegetable ivory has long been known, but vegetable meerschaum, vegetable horn, or vegetable coral, as they may with strict propriety be called, are late acquisitions, brought before the public for the first time during the late Exposition. The mode of preparation of these substances is as follows:—Common potatoes are peeled and macerated for about thirty-six hours in water acidulated with eight per cent. of sulphuric acid.

After this operation they are dried in blotting paper, and then in hot sand for several days on plates of chalk or plaster of Paris which are changed daily; being compressed at the same time, an excellent imitation of meerschaum, answering well for the carver, or any purpose not requiring a high temperature, will be obtained. Greater hardness, whiteness, and elasticity will be produced if water containing three per cent. of soda, instead of eight per cent. sulphuric acid is used. And if, after the potatoes have been macerated in the solution of soda, they are boiled in a solution containing nineteen per cent. soda, a substance resembling stag's horn, and which may be used for knife handles, etc., will be formed.

Turnips may be used instead of potatoes in the production of the artificial horn; and if carrots are substituted for the potatoes a very excellent artificial coral will be obtained.

THUNDER MADE VISIBLE.—Dr. Töpler focalizes a ray of light on the object glass of a telescope, which is connected with a screen in such a way that any disturbance of the air becomes visible; for instance, the intense sonorous vibrations of the atmosphere produced by electric explosions show themselves in the telescope as visible rings or circles of light.

An instrument has been contrived for determining the colours of the stars. A disc capable of revolution and filled with glasses, or solutions of different colours, is set before a small telescope, through which a platinum wire, made incandescent by a battery, is viewed, and the particular colour is brought round before this artificial star, which will make its tint identical with that of the real star under observation.

THE EARTHWORKS OF THE LATE PARIS EXHIBITION, INCLUDING THE PARK, AMOUNTED TO UPWARDS OF HALF A MILLION CUBIC YARDS. The ironwork amounted to 13,200 tons, of which 12,900 tons were in the great machinery gallery. The windows of this gallery presented a surface of 53,700 square yards, and those of the other galleries 25,000. The palace itself occupied an area of 140,184 square yards. Of this space 61,000 square yards were devoted to France, 21,653 to England, and 2,900 to the United States.

METALLIC VEGETATION.—This new chemical toy is founded on the decomposition of a solution of silicate of soda and a metallic salt, such as crystallized chloride of iron, proto-chloride of cobalt, nitrate of uranium, or sulphate of protoxide of manganese. A tumbler having a flat bottom is first filled with silicate of soda of a density equal to 22 deg. Baumé, and then small fragments of a salt are thrown in. After some hours a miniature forest may be seen, variegated by remarkable forms and most brilliant colours.

TEMPERATURE.—In January's Gossip Mr. White states that the glass stood at 51 deg. on the first ult., and at 26 deg. on the second. My glass stood at 52 deg. and 30 deg. If Mr. White will refer to December 19, 1861, he will find there was a much greater difference. My glass stood at 72 deg. on the 19th, and at 34 deg. on the 20th, showing a fall of 38 deg.; this latter one was in the sun. I find in my weather table for 1864, November 3, it was 23 deg. in the sun and the following day it was 38 deg.,

showing a fall of 44 deg. Unless a person is in the habit of registering the changes of the thermometer, they cannot form the slightest idea of the trying nature of our climate. Thus in June, 1866, the glass stood at 55 deg., in December same year it stood at 72 deg. I make no doubt that were I to search my tables for a few years back, I should find still greater changes. No wonder we English are so subject to diseases of the respiratory organs.

THE EUPHRATES AND ATLANTIC.—The wreck of the Euphrates, which was lost with all hands, has been cast ashore at Trecastell Farm, on what is known as the Black Rock, about twelve miles south of Holyhead. The cargo was palm oil, bar-wood, and ebony from Calabar. The palm-oil casks are for the greater part broken up, but the palm oil is not lost. Fortunately palm oil washed ashore behaves like tallow in the bilges of a steamer; it is rolled up into balls, and the beach is covered with these for about half a mile. These balls vary in size from one inch to four inches diameter, but a few are as much as eight inches. So well has this balling been done, that it is thought very little of the cargo will be lost, and ten cooper and a number of men with horses and carts are busy collecting the cargo. Captain Wyld, for the Glasgow underwriters, is superintending the work.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

MULTITUDES of women lose health and life every year, in one of two ways; by busying themselves in a warm kitchen until weary, and then throwing themselves on a bed or sofa, without covering, and perhaps in a room without fire; or by removing the outer clothing, and perhaps changing the dress for a more common one, as soon as they enter the house after a walk or a shopping. The rule should be invariable to go at once to a warm room and keep on all the clothing at least for five or ten minutes, until the forehead is perfectly dry. In all weathers, if you have to walk and ride on any occasion, do the riding first.

RUNNING UPSTAIRS.—It is frequently of advantage to others, besides politicians, to know which way the wind blows; domestically, it is of considerable practical importance, when a walk or a ride is contemplated. In this case Paterfamilias can run up to the top of the house with his mouth shut, taking two or three stairs at a stride, the result being, that when he reaches the roof, there will be an instinctive desire to draw a long breath, and forcibly too; this sends the air to the remotest branches of the wind-pipe and to the air cells, distending them to their fullest capacity. Such running from cellar to roof, involving the climbing of several pairs of stairs, would very greatly promote lung development, and would ward off consumption from multitudes of the narrow-chested and sedentary. Such a feat performed at three regular times every day, together with some pumping operation, would cause a physical development of the chest in a few weeks, or months at most, which actual measurement would mathematically demonstrate. Having the advantage over gymnasiums and out-door rides or walks, in that they can be attended to every day, rain or shine, cold or hot, and without costing any money, it is to be hoped that many an invalid and sedentary reader will note the suggestion, and practise upon it.

VEGETABLE SOAP.—There are certain plants distributed all over the world yielding a saponaceous juice which, to those who are desirous of having a white, delicate skin, must be far preferable to the finest "ambrosial" "milleflower" or "basket of fruit" soap. No doubt the ancients used such plants instead of soap; perhaps they were the same still used for the like purpose in Italy, and other neighbouring countries. Pliny, in giving the description of one of them, says:—"It grows on a rocky soil and on the mountains, and its leaves are prickly like those of the thistle." If this is the *Gypsophila struthium* of Linnaeus, a plant still used for washing in the southern parts of Italy and Spain, and for which the description corresponds remarkably well, we must leave the botanists to decide. Suffice to say that, besides this, the soap root of Europe, the aloe of Jamaica, the soap tree from the coast of Coromandel, and the horse chestnut, yield said juice, some by their leaves, others by their roots. Its peculiar principle—as chemistry teaches us—is the saponin, a body belonging to that class of organic substances which, upon being treated with certain acids or alkalies, yield glucose or starch sugar among their products of decomposition. The saponin is in its pure state a white solid, of a sweet but acrid after-taste; it leaves, when spread over a plate, a fine looking varnish, but the most peculiar property is the viscosity of its solutions; when they contain camphor or resin, they will bear the heavy mercury.



[TOM HAMMOND'S HIDING-PLACE.]

RED DOUGLASS.

CHAPTER XV.

TOM HAMMOND, after leaving Jeannie Douglass and old Margery, hurried to the ruins, to which they had directed him as a place of concealment, easily finding them, for he had noticed the shattered towers and broken walls, when passing on his way to the cottage, the latter having attracted him by a pillar of smoke up-rising from its chimney.

It was with some difficulty that he reached the foot of the main tower, which Jeannie had spoken of as being the spot where he would find an entrance to subterranean vaults beneath the ruins, for not only was his way obstructed by masses of fallen masonry, but shrubbery, clinging vines, and luxuriant weeds had grown up so thickly as to be almost impenetrable.

But making his way through these he found the head of a flight of stone stairs, and commenced descending. He soon found occasion for the means of light which Jeannie had provided, for as he descended he passed altogether from the light of day. But what most surprised and quite alarmed him as he advanced through a long, narrow passage, was a sign which he had not observed above, that other persons had very recently been along the passage which he was traversing.

A path half-trodden over the damp ground was plainly discernible, and on reaching an iron door, nearly rusted away, he found that it opened with an ease which betokened frequent use. It opened, too, into a large, square vault, which was half filled with small casks and kegs, such as he knew were used for the easy transportation of wines and liquors. Boxes and bales, too, were piled up here and there. And this was not all. There was a long table on which provisions, cups, and bottles were strewn in some disorder. Weapons of various kinds, broad-swords, pistols, and guns were strewn around, and everything looked as if the persons who had left the articles there could not have been long absent.

"This surely must be a resort of smugglers, for it is near the coast," said Hammond to himself, uneasily. "And were they to find me intruding here, my welcome might be a harsh one. A retreat to some other place of concealment will be a politic move."

The sound of a bugle, faint, yet distinctly audible, reached his ear at that instant.

Instantly he thought of Jeannie and the bugle which he had begged her to sound, if she were in peril.

"Donald Douglass has tracked me to the cottage, and she may be in peril from him in his anger," he muttered. "To leave her to face him alone were too dastardly a thought."

Snatching from the table a brace of pistols, which a single glance told him were loaded, he rushed back over the route by which he came. His progress was far easier now, for he had broken a pathway through the vines and shrubbery as he came, and in a few minutes he was once more in the open air, bounding with the speed of a hunted stag towards old Margery's cottage.

Ere he reached its open door he heard the sound of angry altercation and of rude blows inside, and on springing across the threshold saw a sight which made the blood in his veins boil madly.

Stretched upon the cottage floor, bleeding profusely from a gash in his face, lay a young Scottish mountaineer, while over his body old Margery was vainly doing battle with her crutch against a couple of constables with staves, while in one corner, holding the bugle in one hand and a drawn dagger in the other, Jeannie confronted Donald Douglass, who, with a broadsword in his hand, stood in a threatening attitude before her. Eight or ten other constables were in the room, but he paused not an instant to count the odds, as he leaped over the threshold.

"Cowards!" he shouted. "Let the woman alone, and tackle a man if you've nothing better to do."

"There he is at last! Down with him!" yelled Donald Douglass.

"Down goes the first who advances!" cried Hammond, presenting a pistol with each hand.

"Upon him—there is a reward for him, dead or alive!" shouted the leader of the constables, himself springing forward.

Hammond knew delay would be fatal—two flashes, two reports, and two of his would-be captors dropped in their death agony to the floor.

Then, casting down the useless pistols, he instantly drew the bright claymore which Jeannie Douglass had given him.

And it was time his blade was out, for Donald Douglass had sprung forward with upraised sword to cleave him down, and the other constables were pressing upon him in a fierce body. But, backing to a corner, the brave fellow in a second was on guard, in a position which told his foes that he well understood the use of the weapon that he held.

For a few seconds the fearful uneven combat went on, while poor Jeannie, scarce knowing why she did it, blew peal upon peal on the bugle which she held.

And now almost a fatal moment for brave Tom Hammond arrived. Fully occupied with the sword of Donald Douglass in front, and the staves of his companions, he had not thought of a window being almost in his rear, until a cowardly hand thrust through it caught him by the sword arm, while a yell of exultation bursting from the lips of Donald Douglass told him that the act was premeditated.

That moment had been his last he thought, but the next second changed the scene in his favour. A half dozen rough-looking men, garbed as seamen, but wearing the tartan plaid of the clan Douglass in their caps, rushed into the cottage, and both Jeannie and old Margery uttered cries of joy as they recognized the new-comers.

"Walt Gräme, out upon ye! Outlawed smuggler that ye are, begone I say!" cried Donald Douglass, as he glanced at the leading intruder.

"Outlaw or smuggler, I am more than a match for you, you perjured thief!" cried the other, beating the sword from his hand at one blow, and cutting the arm which held Tom Hammond clear from the body of its owner with another.

The constables instantly saw that they were no match for the well-armed new-comers, and as Donald Douglass led the way through a back door of the cottage, they followed, leaving two dead and one crippled comrade on the ground, the latter bleeding so fearfully that he soon would have perished, had not the man whom Donald Douglass had called Gräme speedily bound up the stump of his arm, with a skill which proved him an adept at surgery.

"What is the meaning of all this?" asked Gräme as he looked first at Jeannie and then at Hammond, who leaned almost breathless with fatigue on the good sword with which he had so well defended himself.

"It means that Donald Douglass came here to insult a defenceless woman!" cried Jeannie, "and that he has found more than a match in this brave friend of my husband, and in you, who, though not of his kin, are yet clanmen and friends."

"He wears the seal of the chief!" said Gräme, looking at the hand of Hammond.

"Yes!" said the latter. "It was given to me by the Red Douglass in the same hour when I swore to defend his noble wife from wrong and insult."

"It is a safeguard and a sign of power whenever his friends see it!" said Gräme. "But the work that has been done here will bring trouble this way. These dead men were constables, I see."

"Yes, in pursuit of me on a false and cruel charge made by Donald Douglass for my ruin."

"They deserve their fate, for following him. But

those that are left will return with more force, perhaps, than we could safely meet. We must leave this place, and that in a hurry."

"Where is your smuggling lugger, Walt Graeme?" asked Jeannie. "Will it withstand the storms of an ocean voyage?"

"Many a storm has it met, many another can it weather," said the smuggler.

"Then let us all hasten in it to join the Red Douglass in his new-found freedom!" she cried.

"Free? The Red Douglass free?" cried the smuggler.

"Yes, and defying the government which wronged him," said Jeannie, proudly, and then she read to the smuggler and his companions the account which we have already given to the reader.

"We will go to him, and the sooner we are on board the better," said Graeme.

Then he raised the yet insensible form of poor Sandie, whom he recognized, and by the aid of stimulants soon had him again on his feet.

Then bidding Jeannie and Margery to gather together such clothing and other moveables as they needed, he bade his men carry them, and himself led the way, followed by the entire party, to the vaults which Hammond had already discovered.

From these, by a long, subterranean passage, the party reached a deep ditch which made in from the sea, where lay the large, well-armed and well-manned smuggling lugger which Jeannie had spoken of.

At a signal from their leader, the smugglers on board hastily launched two large surf-boats from her deck, and in a short time the entire party were transferred to the vessel.

Here Walt Graeme held a brief consultation with his second in command with regard to the quantity of water and provisions on board, for he well knew that if he took the voyage then under contemplation, he would need a large supply of both.

Provisions and water could be had by remaining where they were for a few hours, as there was a store of the first in the subterranean vaults which they had just left, and a mountain stream dashed, pure and sparkling, into the ocean brine at the head of the little bay in which the lugger was moored.

But Graeme, though brave, was prudent, and prudence warned him that it was dangerous to remain there, since Donald Douglass and the baffled policemen would surely raise all the force that could be obtained, to apprehend those whom he wished to protect, and to capture himself and men as well.

Therefore he concluded to destroy all he had to leave behind, and to cross the coast of France for all that he needed, as well as to leave those of his crew who might not desire to go where he was going. For he intended, outlawed as he knew he was, or would be, to sink his fortunes with the Red Douglass, to whom he had always adhered as the chieftain of his clan, before trouble came to lessen his power.

While one part of his crew was hurriedly getting the lugger ready for sea, and weighing anchor, a party went ashore in charge of his mate, to carry out the orders he had given, for the destruction of what he was forced to leave behind him.

They were not long gone, and, when he returned, the mate told Graeme that he had fired a train, which would soon lead to a quantity of powder and the store of spirits left in the vaults, and the sooner the lugger was off the better.

The boats were at once got in, the anchor raised to the bows, and, as sail after sail was spread, the lugger moved out of the bay, slowly at first, but gathering way as, leaving the lee of the land, her sails filled.

Suddenly a large party of men were seen on the top of a cliff overlooking the sea, and nearly over the subterranean outlet, by which Graeme and his party reached the lugger.

"They'll get well shook up, if nothing more, before many minutes!" said the mate of the lugger with a smile.

"They deserve it. It is Donald Douglass and a fresh gang of land-sharks after us," said Graeme. "If he had come alone, I would wait here until I could get him on board, for I owe him a debt that I would rejoice to pay. But we should only lose some good men in an affray with so many, and to exchange good men for bad is folly. So I will bide my time, for Donald Douglass will be sure to fall in my way some time or other."

"Hark—if they don't feel that earthquake the rocks are too heavy for powder to lift," cried the mate.

And even as he spoke first one and then a dozen or more rapidly successive reports, like the sullen sound of distant thunder, reached their ears, while the police on top of the cliff seemed in terrible trouble, some of them falling down as if paralyzed, others flying for their lives over the upreaving rocks, and others yet seeming to disappear amidst a cloud of smoke and dust, which now rose from the top of the cliff.

"There go ten good barrels of gunpowder and heaven only knows how much brandy and gin," said the mate with a dry laugh. "If the brimstone and steam don't make them think of where they'll go to when they die, they're too stupid to live."

The breeze freshened as the lugger drew out from the shore, and in a very few minutes the bold smuggler and his guests were gazing on the billowy swell of blue water, while the land was fast fading from sight.

CHAPTER XVI.

NEVER did a crafty Indian warrior select a more appropriate spot for an ambuscade, than the one hunted up and chosen by Seth Warner for the place where the Red Douglass could lay in wait with the major part of his band for the arrival of the governor, Sir Henry de Mortimer, and his suite, en route Ballarat, and the mining regions. The usually travelled road, at the selected point, led into the mouth of a wild, woody ravine, with lofty, overhanging cliffs on either side.

Through this ravine passed a considerable stream, rapid, yet too deep to be forded, except at the rapids, and there the swift current would have made fording very dangerous, if indeed it were possible.

The road led along the banks of this stream, sometimes on one side and then on the other, as the windings of the creek or river made it necessary. Wooden bridges, substantially planked, made the various crossings possible.

The ravine was very crooked, and its turns began at the very entrance, where the stream came rushing in a foaming torrent from the gorge.

Just around the first bend was a small plateau, where teams could pass easily, but beyond it for some distance the road was so narrow that a dozen men standing side by side would completely block it up.

And here, on a bright sunny morning, the Red Douglass ranged about one hundred of his best men. He had sent a party as a picket-guard up the ravine towards Ballarat, to stop and hold all persons coming from that direction, and he had a party, double the strength of the last mentioned, hidden in the bushes close by the first bridge in the ravine, whose orders were to close in upon the rear of the governor's party when it had passed, and to hold the bridge and prevent his retreat or the flight of any of his followers.

Dressed in the tartan plaid of his clan, with the long black ostrich plume waving in his cap, his huge broadsword by his side, pistols in his belt, and bugle in his left hand, the Douglass looked fit for a prouder command than that of a band of desperate and hardened outlaws. But, desperate and lawless as they were, to him they were respectful and obedient.

The sun had nearly reached its meridian, when a scout sent from Warner announced the near approach of the column to the Red Douglass.

Warner was travelling with the governor's party under the name of Smith, and he had so well performed his part, that his chief knew exactly the number of the governor's suite and escort, how they were armed, and within a few minutes time, the hour when they would reach his ambuscade.

He sternly cautioned his men against any noise, which might prematurely inform the governor of impending danger, and then, himself concealed with the rest, he waited for the party.

Not long now, was his patience tried. Confident and bold, with his escort of more than fifty mounted men, the governor rode with some gentlemen of his staff ahead of the column, talking and laughing loudly, while the carriage which contained his wife and daughter and their female attendants came close behind him. The escort, lacking the discipline and order of a military body, were scattered here and there, having no advance or rear guard, the chief of police riding near the governor, and chatting in his usual boasting vein about the safe progress of the party.

Seth Warner, or Smith, as they knew him, had been requested to act as guide, and he was a few paces in advance of all.

"I say, my friend, what stream is this?" asked the chief of police, loudly, as they crossed the first bridge at the entrance of the ravine.

"I don't know no name for the bridge, mister!" said Seth. "But this valley is called 'The Robber's Glen.' It looks kind o' dark and smoky here, doesn't it?"

"Rather dark, but no way scary. True-born Englishmen, my man, don't get frightened at a few rocks and gnarled trees. We'd like to see some of those robbers you told us about. If that Red Douglass had the courage to attack such a party as this, he couldn't have found a better place than this to do it in."

"I believe you, and considerin' the danger, I'll ride ahead and see what's to be seen afore you come along!" replied Seth, and touching his horse with the spur he dashed around the next turn at a gallop.

The party laughed and rode on, the chief of police a few yards in advance of all. But when he turned the corner he saw something which did not look very laughable. At the narrowest part of the road, at the upper part of the small plateau before spoken of, was a compact body of men with muskets carried at shoulder, with bayonets fixed, while a few paces in their front stood a man of gigantic stature, with a face darkly frowning, and a drawn sword in his hand.

Before the chief of police could check his horse, he was within a few steps of this man, and the governor had also come into the small, level plateau with his immediate suite.

"Halt!" cried the gigantic leader of the party in front, loudly, and in a tone of stern command. "Halt! and dismount, if you consider life worth saving."

"Who are you? Do you know that the governor of this colony is here with an armed force for his protection?" cried the chief of police, with a voice that lacked much of its usual firmness of tone.

"The Red Douglass is governor here, and he cares not who opposes. Dismount every man, or—Ready, men! ready!"

In an instant, the front rank kneeling, the two next ranks presenting over the heads of their comrades, a terrible range of musket barrels fell to a level with the bodies of the governor and his party.

"Halt and dismount, or we fire!" cried the Red Douglass, more sternly than at first.

All halted but the governor, who rode to the head of his party and thus checked his horse.

"Man, whoever you are, I am Sir Henry de Mortimer, Governor of Australia!" he cried. "How dare you attempt to stop me or my party?"

"By the right of might?" The Red Douglass knows no other here. But I have no time to trifling. Dismount, if you would not have your wife and daughter, who ride behind you, look upon your dead body!" cried the stern chief.

A policeman who came up from the rear hurriedly made a report to the chief of police.

"We are cut off in the rear, your excellency!" cried the chief of police. "The bridge is occupied, and the hill-sides there are full of men."

"Why don't your men fight and eat their way through, one way or the other?" cried the governor, angrily.

"If your excellency orders it, we will try," said the chief of police; "but for the ladies' sake had we not better try some other way of getting clear? We are evidently outnumbered, and if that body in front were to fire, few of us would be left, if even any, to do the fighting."

"You are right," said the governor, lowering his tone. "But this is infamous. Why were not your men on the look-out? Where is that guide?"

"Oh, they've most likely killed or silenced him in some way. I see no signs of him," said the chief.

"Must I again bid you dismount, or shall my bullets empty your saddles?" thundered the chief of the brigands.

"We will dismount, since you have us at such a disadvantage, and as we have helpless women in our train," said the governor, setting the example. "But, Sir Robber, were there no women with me, I would fight you to the last."

"If the ladies are in your way, Sir Henry de Mortimer, I can spare men to place them under a safe-guard, and then give you a chance for fighting, if you desire it so much," said the brigand, haughtily.

"Are you the man known as the Red Douglass?" asked Sir Henry, without accepting the offer made by the former.

"I am!" was the reply, boldly made. "By the reward you offer, it seems that I am of some value in your eyes."

"You will find a larger reward offered, after this fresh outrage," said the governor, angrily. "And now, as resistance seems to be useless, if robbery be your intention, we will deliver up what money there is with us."

"All in good time, Sir Henry—all in good time!" said the Red Douglass, calmly. "First, however, advance to that white rock there, and lay down your sword and pistols. After that, let every man in your party do the same."

"What guarantee have I that, when unarmed and utterly defenceless, you will not murder us?"

"The word of a Douglass, who would not utter a falsehood to save his own life!" replied the chief, looking as noble and dignified as if no stain had fallen on his proud name.

"I take it!" said the governor, moodily; "and,

advancing, he unbelted his sword, and laid it, with his pistol, on the rock designated.

Then, man after man of his suite, and lastly the police force, laid down their weapons in the same place.

At a signal from their chief, a dozen or more of his armed band came forward to guard the weapons.

"Now, each rider will bring forward his horse," said the Red Douglass, at the same time calling men forward to receive the animals.

"What? Will you take our horses from us? How are we to proceed or go back?" asked the surprised governor.

"That is a question which you must debate among yourselves," said the chief. "That is, those who give the pledge which I shall demand, for those who do not, will be my guests, or prisoners, for a long time, if you like the last term best."

"What pledge do you require?" said the governor, uneasily.

"Of each person whom I release, I shall exact a solemn promise never, either directly or indirectly, to offer molestation to me or my men, never to aid in the arrest of any of us, or to give information by which we may be arrested."

"And do you expect me, the governor of this colony, to give such a pledge?"

"You will not go free without it. If you wish a trial of life in the Black Forest, on a bread and water diet, you can refuse the promise, and become my guest for an indefinite period."

"Idiot! Do you not know that the whole force of the island will be employed for my rescue?" he replied.

"And I shall not only defy that force, but hold you and all others who are contumacious in spite of it," said the chief, quietly.

"Man, you are running your neck into a halter, he said.

"Perhaps. If so, I hold the steel to cut the rope, ere the rope tightens. But decide, and that quickly. I have no time to lose in talk."

"I will give no pledge," said the governor, angrily.

"Very well. You are a prisoner then, and must wear such jewels as were once placed upon my limbs. The irons, Ralph Warden—the irons!"

"Yes, my lord; here they are!"

And the accomplished English robber came forward with handcuffs, a pair of which were instantly placed on the wrists of the governor.

The latter was for an instant speechless with indignation, but when language came to him, he vented his anger in the most abusive oaths and threats.

"If you do not cease this vile tirade, my next order will be to have you gagged," said the Red Douglass, sternly. "I will not allow you to utter words which from one of my own men would meet the death penalty. Be silent, if you cannot be respectful."

Then turning to the other men who stood unarmed before him, he said, sternly:

"Your choice, men—the pledge I demand and your release on parole, or an imprisonment in irons, and a diet that will not keep you many degrees from starvation, for I have no great store of provisions to spare."

"Take the pledge, all of you, for there will be plenty without you to hunt him and his miscreant band down," said the governor. "I will not give it, but I will wait for my rescue!"

Most of the men advanced and gave the required pledge, signing a paper which the Red Douglass prepared. The penalty of breaking the pledge was to be death, if ever any who did so fell into the power of the band.

The chief of police and the governor's secretary both chose irons and confinement to release under the conditions imposed. The governor in vain advised them otherwise. They chose to share his fate, whatever it might be.

After this matter was settled, the Douglass ordered Gasparoni, the Italian, to go with a couple of his men and escort the carriage containing the ladies to the front.

"You surely are too manly to detain women?" said the governor, in alarm. "My wife and daughter are in that carriage."

"I am aware of it, Sir Henry," said the brigand chief, quietly. "I also remember that I was torn from the side of a dear young wife, when the cruel hand of injustice consigned me to a living grave. If you are to remain in the Black Forest, you surely would like to have your wife and daughter near you?"

"To be exposed to wrongs and insults by thieves and robbers? No, sir—no! Let them go—let them go! even if they be under ransom."

"No, Sir Henry; it would be bad policy. While they are in my hands I hold a protecting shield, for

if harm be offered towards me or mine, woe to those whom I hold as hostages."

"Hostages?"

"Yes, Sir Henry, hostages. For as such I shall detain the ladies, treating them honourably while I remain unmolested."

"Let them go free, and I will give the pledge you require, to hold good so long as I am governor of this colony," said Sir Henry.

The immediate approach of the carriage put a momentary stop to the conversation.

"What does this mean, Sir Henry—what does this mean?" cried his wife, springing from the carriage when it stopped, followed by her daughter. "Are we in the hands of robbers?"

"We are in the power of the Red Douglass," replied Sir Henry.

"The Red Douglass! Oh, horrible! Shall we all be murdered?"

"No, fair lady!" said the tall chieftain, bowing with a courtesy that would have been noticed in a kingly court. "The Red Douglass acknowledges too much respect for your sex to treat a female rudely."

"Then you are the Red Douglass?"

And the lady looked at his tall noble figure and his fine face with more of curiosity than fear, apparently.

"That was my name when I stood at the head of my clan in Scotland," said the chief, proudly. "And now that misfortune has fallen upon me, through the perjuries of others, I am not inclined to change it."

"Why are we delayed, mother?" asked the daughter.

"The Red Douglass is collecting toll, I expect, child," said Lady Eleanor, with a faint smile.

"The Red Douglass—that cannot be he? He looks too handsome and too noble to be a robber," said the daughter, in a whisper.

"Yes, it is he, nevertheless," said the lady.

Then, for the first time, observing the irons on the wrists of her husband, the lady exclaimed:

"Why is the governor thus manacled? Why is he treated so rudely?"

"Because he acted with great imprudence, lady, refusing conditions which would have left him free to go where he pleased. He has called me everything but a gentleman, a matter of no consequence, however, for his opinion in his own. But threatening the safety of my men, as he did, it was necessary to make his person secure."

"You will take off his irons at my request, will you not?"

And the lady looked most entreatingly at the chief.

"Yes, lady, at your request. But now even a more dangerous guard will be placed upon him. Signor Gasparoni, place two of your trustiest men, skilful with both pistol and dagger, in charge of Sir Henry, with orders to kill him the moment he offers to escape. Then take off his irons."

"Oh! must he be?" asked the lady.

"Yes, for he makes it necessary. His pledge of honour not to molest us, or, by his orders, to cause us to be troubled, would have secured his instant freedom."

"He is mad to refuse it!" cried the lady. "Oh, Sir Henry, do accept the conditions! What is the loss of the money we have with us to the loss of liberty. Pay any ransom, but let us return together."

"No, not with a pledge which would affect my honour or power," said the governor, firmly.

"Then we need not hesitate any longer," said the Red Douglass. "Do you ladies ever ride on horseback?"

"Oh, yes, often. Our side saddles are in one of the baggage-waggons," cried the Lady Mary.

"I am glad to hear it, since a carriage cannot pass over the route which I shall take on my return," said the Red Douglass. "I will have your saddles found and put on horses immediately, for we must be on our way speedily. You need not fear but that your wardrobe will be carried along, for my band will leave nothing of value behind."

"Then, are we also prisoners?" asked the lady.

"Guests, fair lady, guests is a more pleasant word to use. I shall endeavour to make your residence in the Black Forest as pleasant as it can be, under the circumstances. I see that you have your attendants with you. I am informed, also, that you have tents in the baggage-waggons; therefore, your accommodations, though not palatial, will be, at least, comfortable."

"How romantic! I don't think he means any harm to us," said the Lady Mary.

"None in the world, upon my honour, but simply to detain you as hostages for the proper conduct of Sir Henry, and those who choose to risk great peril to please him," said the Red Douglass. "And, mark

my words, all who go are free. The Red Douglass is no common robber, not a thief or murderer by profession. What he is, wrong has made him. And until right restores him to his own, and an honoured name, in his native land, here will he live, a free and independent sovereign in the Black Forest, exacting tribute when and where he pleases. Now all, except those who have refused the pledge, are free to return to Melbourne."

"But, without horses, how can we get there?" asked one of the police.

"Go on foot, as we did, when we came," said the Red Douglass. "I have need of horses to carry my baggage upon, and for other purposes; therefore have I taken them. Begone, while ye may, for I want no spurs lurking about my heels. As you pass from the valley, at the bridge, each person will deliver up his valuables to the lieutenant in command there, and it will be prudent in him not to make a search necessary, for it might be conducted rudely."

The governor had not much to boast of in the loyalty of his followers, so rapidly did they avail themselves of this opportunity to leave.

In a few moments himself, the chief of police, and the secretary, were all of his party left, except the ladies.

In a short time the captured arms were packed for transportation on horseback, the horses saddled for the use of the ladies, and then the three male prisoners, under close guard, were mounted on inferior horses, while the guards rode the best, so as to make escape impossible.

THE WITCH FINDER.

CHAPTER I.

It was in Salem that there arose a series of startling and mysterious occurrences, the like of which has never been seen elsewhere upon the earth—the great tragedy of witchcraft!

Founded in 1626, and enlarged from time to time by successive immigrations, this ancient town had become, as early as 1692, the centre of a numerous swarm of colonists, its career having been a continual advance in all the pursuits of a rich, commercial and agricultural development.

It had naturally drawn to itself a large share of the wealth and intelligence of the colony, and had thus early become noted for the eloquence of its divines, for the public spirit of its merchants, for the high character of its officials, and for the degree of prosperity in every material and mental sense which has rarely been equalled in the annals of colonization.

The whole of the small peninsula called the Neck had been covered promptly by houses, among which log-cabins and frame dwellings were about equally prominent, and the tide of population had long since overspread the larger peninsula on which is built the present city.

The Indians had been driven into the wilderness—the forests cleared for miles and miles inland—the land enclosed and cultivated; and all the necessary arts and manufactures had kept pace with the new domination.

A court-house, a number of churches, several wharves, a row of warehouses, and a public square, in which were a gaol and a pillory, had already given character to the town, and nothing more was wanting to stimulate the joyous pride of an inhabitant, or to bespeak the admiration of a transient observer.

On a plot of ground now included in the "common" of Salem, there could have been seen, in the last year above mentioned, one of those quaint frame dwellings which had then begun to give dignity to the settlements. It was about thirty feet in length by twenty-four in breadth, a story and a half in height, shingled on every side, in accordance with the style of that period, and neatly painted within and without.

The centre of the building was occupied by an immense old-fashioned chimney built up from the cellar, and expanded on the main floor by a large oven. The entrance from the street was into a hall, the back of which was one of the sides of the aforementioned chimney, and leading from this hall were two other doors—one to the right, which opened into the family sitting-room, and one to the left, which opened into the principal bed-room. The third and most important apartment, the kitchen, with its yawning fireplace, was in the rear of the other two, and of the chimney, occupying the whole length of the house, if we include as a portion of it the large pantry which had been cut off from one of its extremities.

In front of the house was a small yard, enclosed by a fence and agreeably ornamented with

lilacs, honeysuckles and other flowering shrubs; and a small porch, which, in the summer, was covered with vines, which at all seasons protected the front-door, and gave the finishing air of comfort to that part of the dwelling. There was a rear-door, of course, which communicated with a back-yard, in which were a wood-shed and smoke-house, a huge pile of wood, a small barn and cow-pen, and a well of water, with its sweep and oaken bucket. A garden, a small pasture-lot, and a still smaller orchard, completed the remaining features of the homestead.

For many years anterior to the date of which we write, this somewhat pretentious dwelling had been the abode of a family consisting of three persons—a prominent colonist named Waybrook, his wife, and their only daughter.

Mr. Waybrook and his consort had come to the settlement in their early life, not long after their marriage, bringing with them a portion of worldly goods, respectable for the times, and had at once erected the house in question. Here their daughter Hester had been born to them, several years after their arrival, and here all the subsequent years of the family had glided away in the most unalloyed happiness.

At first a tiller of the soil, the husband and father had gradually turned his attention to commerce, and had at last become a leading merchant of the colony, making repeated voyages across the ocean for goods, and thus increasing his wealth, at the same time that he enhanced the public weal and conferred great benefits upon his neighbours. His house, to be sure, was not so large or handsome as some of those surrounding it, and particularly some of those built of bricks brought from England; but his toil had nevertheless been well rewarded, and an air of comfort, taste, refinement, such as belongs to the residence of a thrifty merchant in the mother-country, had long since been transplanted to his colonial dwelling.

The winter of 1692 was beginning, on an early day of November, as the winters did in those days, with the savage breath of tempests—a snow falling, the wind blustering, the Atlantic shore from Maine to Nantucket accumulating ice, the forests whitening under their wintry mantle, and the face of nature vanishing under its annual shroud.

As night approached, the little sitting-room of the house we have described was occupied by a solitary person—a young girl, whom we shall have great pleasure in introducing to the reader.

She was Hester Waybrook, the honoured trader's daughter.

She looked as delicate and fragile as the timid mayflower, that lifts its head amid the snows of spring-time, and as out of place in the midst of her rugged surroundings, as that harbinger of summer amid the inclemencies of its favourite season.

In reality, however, she possessed all the endurance of the hardy flower to which we have likened her. Transparent as were her high and noble temples, pure as was her sweet face in its rare and innocent beauty, delicate as was the soft tint that fluttered in and out of her cheeks, and winsome as was the expression that made its home about her sensitive mouth, she had a moral force of character, a capability of heroism in her young soul, that many a strong man might have envied.

Her eyes were as brown as the berries that grew wild in the rough forests; her sunny curls were like the silken tassels of the Indian corn; her step was as light as that of the young fawn; and her every movement was full of a wild grace, tempered with an exquisite gentleness and the rarest inborn refinement.

We need only add that her mind was worthy of its lovely setting, and that her soul was the home of all tender and womanly virtues, the abode of all noble sympathies, the altar of all those holy and loving aspirations which distinguish the true woman.

The sitting-room was a cosy little apartment, furnished in accordance with the times. Its windows were curtained with snow-white dimity, edged with knitted fringe. Its floor was covered with a bright, new carpet, and its neatly whitewashed walls exhibited several framed samplers, a number of quaint pictures, and three well-cut silhouettes, representing the profiles of the family.

Upon the wooden mantel-piece were a pair of tall brass candlesticks, polished to the last degree of brightness, and a few trinkets that had been brought from England. In the fireplace, where a huge log was burning, a pair of fire-dogs burnished like gold reflected the ruddy, cheerful light. The furniture comprised two or three straight-backed chairs, with low seats, a couple of wooden settles, their bareness relieved by crimson cushions at each end, two great easy-chairs, one furnished with rockers, and a supply of footstools covered with neatly-executed embroidery.

At the instant we take the liberty of looking in upon this charming daughter of the colony, she was seated in one of the high-backed chairs, with her feet on a footstool, her hands resting idly upon some neglected work in her lap, and with a look of abstraction upon her fresh, bright features.

She was indulging in that very feminine occupation—dreaming with her eyes wide open—and her thoughts were evidently of the most pleasant nature, for a tender light filled her eyes, a faint tinge born of affectionate longing covered her cheeks, and a spiritual radiance that was almost a smile gave a sweet and winning expression to her lips.

"Come, Philip! come, father!" she suddenly murmured, her ardent longings finding voice. "How glad will be your welcome!"

As if her day-dreams had all ended in that fervent ejaculation, she aroused herself to the realities of the moment, and resumed her work.

A step was heard in the kitchen at this juncture, and the next instant the young girl was joined by her mother.

A glance at the maternal form and face would have told an observer to whom the daughter was indebted for her charming person and mind. There were the same eyes, the same hair, the same figure and features, the same pure and gifted qualities of heart, the same noble type of womanhood.

In a word, there was a marvellous resemblance between the two, not only in their externals, but in the innermost gifts of their souls.

Never, perhaps, has a mother reproduced herself more completely than had Mrs. Waybrook in her only daughter.

The only difference between them appeared to be that which time had established. The matron's form was thinner, her step less elastic, her voice less silvery, her hand less soft and delicate, but she was nevertheless a singularly beautiful woman, endowed with all the charms of her sex, and radiant with mental and physical vigour.

The clearness of Hester's complexion had nearly become paleness in the mother's, owing to ill-health, and the fulness of her limbs and features had become somewhat impaired in the maternal original, but in all else the ravages of time were scarcely visible.

"Working yet?" said Mrs. Waybrook, in her usual pleasant tone, and with her habitual look of tenderness, as she seated herself beside Hester. "Don't you wish to talk a little with me?"

"Certainly," was the reply, with an answering smile of affection, as the maiden laid aside her work. "You know that I am always delighted to converse with you, especially if you talk of Philip and father."

"True; and it is of them that I wish to speak with you," declared Mrs. Waybrook, in a voice which a whole life of holy love had every day rendered softer and sweeter. "I have just been thinking that it is seven months to-day since your father's departure for England."

In good truth, the husband and father had been absent just this period, on one of his customary voyages.

"And the same time since the departure of Philip, inasmuch as they sailed together," responded the maiden, while the rosy hues deepened on her cheeks, at the mention of the loved names, and her tone was full of thoughtful and tender affection. "I have thought of this a score of times since morning."

As was indicated by her words and manner, the maiden had a lover named Philip; a noble young colonist, and navigator, who commanded the vessel in which Mr. Waybrook was making the voyage to the mother-country, and back, and who was, consequently, sharing all the experiences of the husband and father.

"It is fully time for their return," pursued the fond wife and mother, as she caressed the sunny curls of her daughter. "Although I have not said much to you on the subject, lest I should keep you in a continual anxiety about Philip, I have, nevertheless, been hoping every day for a week past, and from moment to moment to see them again with us."

"And I, also, mother," answered Hester, as she slipped her hand into Mrs. Waybrook's, "although I have kept my own counsels, lest I should make you impatient for my father's arrival; I, too, have been looking for them daily during the time you mention, and have thought of them almost continually."

The mother was delighted at this assurance.

"It seems," she murmured, "that our thoughts are ever the same, even when we do not declare them; and it is little wonder that such is the case, for we have equally a great interest in the return of our loved ones—you to be protected from the violent persecutions of that wicked Boardbush—"

"And you, mother," interrupted Hester, "to be protected by my father's presence from the continued agitations into which the late events have plunged us. Ah, how joyful we shall all be when Philip and my father are again with us!"

"Yes, how joyful!" echoed Mrs. Waybrook, in a voice tremulous with emotion. "How delightful it is even to have the hope of their speedy arrival!"

"And what pleasure," pursued Hester, "to think that we are united by this hope, even as we are united by our affection! What a tie it is for us to have such an interest in common! How it deepens our love for each other to share these great hopes, to mingle these holy admirations! Oh, mother, I can never tell you my love—"

"No more than I can tell you mine, my daughter," interrupted Mrs. Waybrook, thrilling to the depths of her soul. "But we know it without words. We feel it in every thought and action! What bliss we have in possessing each other! What rapture in thus mingling our spirits together!"

Moved by a mutual impulse, the happy mother and daughter clasped each other in a fervent embrace, and for a full minute they exchanged caresses in silence.

"I have missed your father so much during his present absence," said Mrs. Waybrook, at length finding her voice, "that I do not mean he shall again leave us. The older I grow, the more I feel the necessity of his continual presence, for the more I live from his life. It seems to me that I have not been as well as usual during the past few weeks, and I have certainly lost a portion of my usual spirits. Besides, all these troubles and perils—this terrible affliction of the colony—"

"Don't think anything about it, dear mother," Hester hastened to say, as she fondled the original of her luxuriant tresses. "Let us look only at the bright side of the picture. Father and Philip are certainly coming—are even now near us, and may arrive this very day. Who knows? And they will bring a world of happiness with them!"

"Yes, a world of heart-light and soul-light, the real light of human existence," the mother made answer, in a tone of deep feeling. "We will indeed look on the bright side, as heretofore, for has not our trust been answered? Surely, my child, the mercies of heaven have been bounteously given us during all these years, and why should they now fail us? There may be trials before us, but a withdrawal of the divine protection never! We have tried to live near to the Great Throne, have placed ourselves within the sacred circle of its might, where all is radiance and beauty, both now and for ever!"

A silence full of love and hope fell upon the couple, and for several minutes it remained unbroken. Heart against heart, and with their souls mingling together, they gave themselves up to the gladness of their mutual affection, to the prayerful yearnings with which they thought of their loved ones, and to all the sweet communings in which their lives and hearts were united.

"The day is wearing away," at length said Mrs. Waybrook, as she arose to her feet. "It is time for me to execute the little errands of which we were speaking. Is the basket ready?"

The daughter answered affirmatively, and hastened to bring from the pantry a basket of respectable dimensions. It had been packed with cold meats, bread and butter, preserves, and a variety of delicacies, the whole covered with a napkin.

"I have resolved to send my plaid shawl to Miss Peabody, now that you are going to visit the prisoners again," remarked Hester, as she produced the article from a closet beside the fireplace. "The poor woman may be cold in her prison, and who is there to give any such thing to her? Her children, like her husband, are all dead, and I thought I could not leave this matter to another, with any certainty of its receiving attention."

"You have done well, my child," responded Mrs. Waybrook, as she received the shawl and laid it across her arm. "I will give it to the poor woman, with the tender blessing I know you send with it. You may have tea ready as soon as you please, for I expect to be gone but a few minutes. If I have time, I may call at the wharf, and possibly on Philip's family, to see if I can get any news of our expected travellers."

"I wish you would," rejoined Hester. "The distance is not great."

While speaking, Mrs. Waybrook had enveloped herself in a warm hood and cloak, put on her overshoes, and made herself ready for her charitable mission. Taking her basket on her arm, and attended by Hester to the door, the good woman left the house, and walked away towards the public square.

"How good she is!" murmured Hester, after watching the retreating form of Mrs. Waybrook until it had vanished at a turning of the street. "Can

I ever love her as much as I ought to do. I must talk cheerfully to her all the evening, to make her forget the sad scenes she is about to witness at the prison."

Filled with this laudable intention, the noble girl closed the door and returned to the sitting-room, and from thence to the spacious kitchen, to execute the farewell charge she had received from her mother. In a few minutes the tea kettle was singing merrily in the great fireplace, the table was laid, a loaf of bread brought from the pantry on its white wooden trencher, some dried venison neatly sliced in thin pieces, a cut-glass dish filled with preserves, and the various preparations of the evening meal completed.

The expression of the maiden's face gradually became serious, while she was thus occupied, and in good truth the errand which had called away her mother, the reflections it had inspired, the anxieties of which the state of Salem was a continual awakener, and, in short, all the emotions of the moment, were of a nature to warrant the grave thoughtfulness which thus took possession of her.

When her simple duties had been duly attended to, she returned to the little sitting-room, where she resumed her work, and her reverie, musing sadly upon the dark events which had lately afflicted the colony, and which the reader will soon have occasion to notice.

Nearly an hour was thus passed, while the wintry wind freshened, while the snow fell thicker and faster, and while the sky became more and more lowering. At last, when the day began to merge into night, when Hester could no longer see to work, and when her long-gathering uneasiness would allow her to remain motionless no longer, she arose and went to the front door, which she opened, stepping under the small porch by which, as we have said, the entrance was protected.

In a moment or two, as the maiden looked up and down the street, the look of passing uneasiness on her face had deepened to one of positive anxiety.

"Where can mother be all this while?" she murmured, half-inaudibly. "Can anything have happened?"

The lowing of cows and the bleating of sheep came to her ears, and she saw in the distance, here and there, a hired man, or a colonist, hastening in person to secure his flocks and cattle for the night. A score of smoky columns were drifting away, above as many dwellings within the limits of her vision, the naked masts and spars of a few small vessels were just visible through the gloom at the wharves of the river, and a few individuals were hurrying homeward in their various directions, more or less near her; but all these surroundings were as familiar as the street itself to the gaze of the fair observer, and her eyes did not linger a moment upon them.

The truth was, she could think of nothing but the non-return of her mother.

Musing upon so many things full of interest, giving herself up to thoughts of her father and lover, wondering if they were really so near as her hopes promised, and expecting from moment to moment the arrival of Mrs. Waybrook, as the proper termination of these musings, she had allowed the time to glide away unheeded, and she now reproached herself, with pang of regret, for having done so.

"Where can she be?" she repeated, as she stepped lightly to the gate, again looking around her. "Why does she not come?"

A gust of wind came over the roof at this instant, casting a shower of snow-flakes over the maiden, while the chilly air seemed to pierce her delicate skin like a knife.

She accordingly turned away, and was about to enter the dwelling, when her glances were arrested by a womanly figure, muffled in a cloak, which had turned into the street at the nearest corner, and was rapidly approaching. Thinking that the new-comer was Temperance Stoughton, the niece of Mr. Stoughton, a schoolfellow and life-long acquaintance, Hester turned back to the gate, and said, as the muffled figure neared her:

"Why, is it you, Tempy? How do you do?"

The person addressed did not halt or reply; did not appear to hear Hester's words, or even look towards her; but, on the contrary, continued her rapid walk past the house, with averted face and an air of cold repulsion.

Another gust of wind, however, swept over the roof at this juncture, throwing open the cloak of the new-comer, and Hester saw that she was, indeed, Temperance Stoughton, her old schoolfellow, as she had suspected.

"Why, it is you, Tempy, sure enough!" she declared, at the same time advancing a step towards her. "Don't you see me?"

With a single sharp look, which was at once haughty, scornful, and menacing, Temperance Stough-

ton walked past the gate, with averted face, and left poor Hester standing on the walk, gazing speechlessly after her, astounded, humiliated, and pained beyond expression.

For an instant, as the maiden thus gazed after the retreating form of Mr. Stoughton's niece, she could hardly credit her senses.

"What is the meaning of this?" she then asked herself, as tears dimmed her eyes. "What have I done? Can it be that some delusion, some terrible suspicion, born of this dreadful witchcraft, has turned her against me?"

The chilly air at length seemed to recall Hester from her fruitless speculations, and she hurried into the house, closing the door behind her. Once in the little sitting-room, she commenced pacing to and fro, a prey to her increasing agitations.

"It must be!" she murmured. "I have not been sufficiently alive to the menaces of this fearful delusion. This absence, this blow from Tempy, the sneers and warnings of Boardbush—all tell me of evil. In truth we are two lone women, whose protectors are absent, and heaven only knows what perils of the sea may be keeping them from us. Oh, hasten, my father! Haste Philip! For we know not in what hour a storm is coming upon us."

As she spoke she busied herself in putting on her cloak and bonnet, with the evident intention of going in quest of her mother.

Her anxiety had increased with every word that arose to her lips, and it had already become terrible.

Now she sprang to the window looking into the street, and now she resumed her hurried walk across the apartment, while the glow of excitement and the paleness of apprehension struggled with each other upon her fair features.

"I will wait just another minute," she at length murmured. "If my mother is not home then, I will go and look for her."

An instant or two, as Hester, sinking back into her chair, thus awaited her mother's return, a profound silence reigned throughout the dwelling.

It was not long, however, before the cheerful purring of Hester's cat was heard in the kitchen, and a pair of sharp claws came in vigorous contact with the doors between the two apartments, as an evident demand for admittance.

* The maiden did not heed it.

The scratching was renewed with redoubled earnestness, till the door fairly rattled, but met with the same inattention.

"Pur-r-r-wow!" called the intelligent animal to its young mistress, seeing that its unaided efforts were not successful. "Pur-r-r-wow!"

Aroused at last from her painful abstraction, by the voice of her pet, Hester arose and opened the door, when a large tabby-cat, with glossy fur, black as a crow, with the exception of a few white spots, walked into the sitting-room, and, purring contentedly, walked around the maiden, rubbing itself against the furniture, and from time to time looking up into her face with an air of interest and attachment that seemed half human.

"Poor Tabby!" sighed Hester, addressing her pet by the simple name she had given it. "You won't desert me, will you?"

The words were scarcely uttered, when a hasty step was heard on the walk; the doors leading into the hall and the sitting-room were hastily opened in succession, and Mrs. Waybrook came tottering into Hester's presence, where she fell, rather than seated herself, upon one of the settlets we have mentioned.

"Mother! What ails you?" cried Hester, springing to the side of the almost fainting woman. "What is the matter?"

The eyes of the good woman were glassy with terror, her countenance deathly pale, and her whole form powerless and quivering.

"Water!" she gasped, catching her breath convulsively. "I'm faint! I've been frightened—running!"

The daughter hastened to bring a tumbler of water, part of which Mrs. Waybrook drank, and Hester then employed the rest to bathe her mother's features. A brief interval of silence followed, during which the maiden continued her ministrations, and Mrs. Waybrook became calmer.

"Frightened?" at length repeated Hester, when her mother had sufficiently recovered her breath and her self-possession. "What has alarmed you?"

"A moment, child," murmured the startled woman, waving her hand towards the door she had left open behind her. "First, lock and bolt all the doors."

Hester hastened to obey.

"Next, the shutters and curtains!" added Mrs. Waybrook.

When all was secure, the maiden returned to her mother's side, and again demanded the cause of her terror.

"I have learned that a terrible peril is hanging

over us," faltered Mrs. Waybrook; "the one great peril which has already overtaken so many of our sex in Salem. In a word, we have been accused of being witches."

CHAPTER II.

THE colonist's daughter hardly knew in what spirit to receive her mother's declaration. On the one hand there was something so stupid, so ridiculous, so worthy of scorn, so utterly contemptible, in an accusation of witchcraft, that it was difficult to repress the bitter and defiant emotions with which it inspired her. On the other hand, however, the maiden knew that the colony had now been struggling several months with this monstrous delusion; that many persons had been hanged or pressed to death as witches; that the prisons of the settlement were already filled to overflowing by persons accused of practising the infernal art; that the monster evil, instead of declining, appeared to be increasing; that neither age nor sex were spared by it; that neither wealth nor respectability were any protection against it; and, worse than all the rest, that the malicious and revengeful persons in Salem were, many of them, availing themselves of the facilities thus afforded them to accuse, worry, and destroy all those with whom they were at enmity, or against whom they had conceived any purpose of revenge.

The first emotion, therefore, of Hester was one of scorn and defiance, but her next one of pain and anguish, for she comprehended what terrible calamities might result from that ghastly accusation.

"Accused?" she murmured. "Who told you so?"

"Mr. Stoughton himself!"

"The storm, then, so long foreseen is about to break upon us?" observed Hester, after a pause. "Well, let it come! We shall not be hunted down easily, nor shall we die weakly!"

Her form seemed to increase in bulk and majesty, as she drew herself up before her mother, calmly and gloriously beautiful, her eyes shining with the clear fixedness of a diamond, and her features as placid as those of a sleeping infant.

"But tell me what you have heard," she pursued, seating herself beside Mrs. Waybrook—"all you have heard and seen in your absence."

The mother had now recovered, in a measure, her self-possession, and at once began her relation, as follows:

"After leaving you, I went to the gaol, as usual, and distributed the provisions among the prisoners. I gave your shawl to Mistress Peabody, who was glad enough to receive it, the poor dear soul! but I know not what use it can be to her, for they threaten to hang her to-morrow!"

"Have no fears on that score," rejoined Hester, quietly and quickly. "The witch-hunter is not born who will harm Mistress Peabody! She will escape from the gaol to-night, as Mistress Stark did a few weeks since!"

"Escape?" exclaimed Mrs. Waybrook, with a start of astonishment. "And how?"

"With a rope-ladder. The women are imprisoned, you know, in the upper part of the gaol, and Mistress Peabody has been aided, first to cut the bars of her cell, and next—"

"But who has aided her?" interrupted Mrs. Waybrook, with breathless interest. "The same friend who aided Mistress Stark—the White Angel?"

Hester assented.

"But how is it," demanded the mother, "that you are informed, so strangely, of the actions of the White Angel? Again you overwhelm me!"

A strange smile flitted over the maiden's face, as she replied:

"I will only say at present that Mistress Peabody's intended escape is known to me. You may dismiss all anxieties about her, and go on with your explanations."

Mrs. Waybrook controlled her emotions, and resumed:

"On leaving the gaol, I hastened to call on Philip's family, but Mr. Ross was absent, and the girls could not give me any information, beyond a belief that their father had received no farther tidings of their brother. I accordingly went to the wharf to speak to your father's partner, but he is no wiser than ourselves, not having received any letters since those of which he has kindly given us knowledge."

"But all these calls do not account for your long absence, dear mother," declared Hester. "You have been gone more than an hour!"

"Listen, dear," rejoined Mrs. Waybrook, "and you will soon know the cause of my delay. Before leaving the prison, I was warned by Mistress Peabody and others, that the believers in witches have had their eyes upon us, and made comments upon our devotion to the persons accused; and one of the keepers even advised me not to come again, and said

that I had better leave the prisoners to their fate. I should share their misfortunes. In the streets, too, while on my way to Philip's and the wharf, I could not help but notice the side-long glances that were cast upon me, the cold looks of many of our old friends, and even looks of aversion and menace. Even Philip's sisters stared at me in a rude and strange manner, and seemed singularly reserved in all their words and actions. You may judge, therefore, of the state of mind I was in by the time my calls were finished, and at that moment, just as I was leaving the wharf, who should I meet but Mr. Stoughton!"

The mother paused a moment to collect her energies, and then resumed:

"You never saw a man so changed as Mr. Stoughton in the last three days. I hardly knew him till he stopped and spoke to me. It seems that during the last week the witches have appeared in his own family!"

"And how, pray?" asked Hester.

"Why, they tease and torment Mr. Stoughton's niece almost continually, by night and by day, fill the room with invisible beings, prick her with pins and needles, buzz in her ears, and twitch her arms and legs in different directions, till it seems as if she would fall in pieces! To crown all," added Mrs. Waybrook, in a hoarse whisper, "she accuses us of being her chief tormentors!"

For a moment Hester was too astounded and appalled for utterance.

"Us? You and I, my mother?" she then asked.

"The niece," replied Mrs. Waybrook, "accuses us of being witches in the most direct manner. She has seen us coming through the doors and windows repeatedly, flying in the air, and all that sort of thing, in company with a troop of kindred witches. For three days past she has been making revelation of the whole matter."

"This accounts for her conduct a few minutes ago," said Hester, and she briefly related the incident which had just transpired between the niece and herself."

"Yes, that's the explanation," declared Mrs. Waybrook, with a long sigh. "It seems that for three days she has been accusing us, and half of the town is now resounding with the charges which have been made against us."

"But on what grounds are these charges made?" demanded Hester. "What has she to give colour to her statement?"

"Oh, our sympathy with those who have been accused, and even with those who have been hanged," replied Mrs. Waybrook. "Another thing, it has been remarked that we keep a very large and handsome cat, by which we are supposed, as now so generally the case, to be assisted in the black art—your Tabby."

At this mention of its name, the animal in question, evidently thinking that it was high time for supper, came out from under the settle, where it had taken refuge at the time of Mrs. Waybrook's abrupt entrance.

"What, Tabby?" exclaimed Hester, hardly knowing whether to laugh or cry, such was the double character of the accusations, at once so silly and atrocious. "My dear, innocent Tabby!"

The animal seemed to be puzzled by these repeated mentions of his name, while no attention was being paid to it, and seated itself in front of the two women, looking from one to the other with numerous cries, as if demanding an explanation of their conduct.

"The poor, faithful beast," murmured Mrs. Waybrook, "I am sorry that it is so, but under the circumstances, we shall have to kill her."

"Kill her?" echoed Hester, as she sprang to her feet and caught the cat to her breast. "Oh, mother! how can you say so?"

"I know it is silly and cruel," responded the mother, distractedly, "but what can we do? The preservation of our own lives must be our first consideration, and the cat is a peril. It will add not a little to our danger if she be found with us."

"True, mother, but why should we kill her?" asked Hester, with a sudden energy and decision.

"There is a better way open. She shall live in defiance of all our enemies. For the present, I'll hide her in the oven!"

In a moment, and before Mrs. Waybrook could offer any objection, the brave girl had disposed of the cat in the manner stated, and returned to the sitting-room, resuming her seat.

"Do as you will, child," said her mother; "but let us not ignore the fact that our position is one of great peril. Insane and stupid as possible, are all these accusations, they are not the less terrible, for are they not followed by imprisonment and death? Have we not seen the best of minds, the wisest, the calmest, carried away by this frenzy, and given up wholly to its cruel domination? Have we

not seen parents accuse their children, and children their parents? What wonder, then, that the judge's niece, becoming giddy and light-headed, at seeing so much of the delusion, and finally losing her wits, has ventured to accuse us? The poor girl is crazy."

"You are mistaken, mother," replied Hester, after a thoughtful pause. "Temperance Stoughton knows only too well what she is doing!"

"Oh, it does not seem possible!"

"It is just as I tell you," declared Hester, with an air of positive knowledge. "Let me make to you a confession that will throw new light upon this accusation. Before Philip Ross met me and became my suitor, he had paid some attention to Temperance Stoughton—enough to learn her probable worthlessness as a wife; and he thereupon dropped her acquaintance, not having committed himself with her in any way or manner. In the meantime, however, Temperance had seen enough of Philip to love him, as much as her cold nature allows her to love anybody, and from that day to this she has been resolved to secure him in marriage. Again and again has Philip told me of her efforts to entrap him, (to use his words,) and for several months past, ever since my present relations to Philip became known, that girl has regarded me with a hatred, for which no language has expression. It is true that she has concealed this hatred, or rather endeavoured to, until to-day; but my eyes have not been blinded, and I know that, inasmuch as she is still desperately resolved to have Philip, she is just as resolved to turn him from me, or in some way to break off our engagement. This is the meaning of her conduct, dear mother, and in these few words you have the whole story of her witches."

A flood of light came over Mrs. Waybrook, while listening to these words, and long before they were finished she saw the whole matter clearly.

"You are right, as usual," she murmured. "The wretched girl is actuated by jealousy and revenge, and not by madness, and such has undoubtedly been the case in more than half of the accusations which have plunged our once happy town into mourning."

"Oh, depend upon it! whenever any affliction of this nature overtakes a community, there are plenty of wicked men and women ready to avail themselves of it, for the furtherance of their evil projects. It is thus that Temperance Stoughton, by her cry of witches, intends to come between me and Philip, taking advantage of his absence, and of my father's."

"I see it all clearly," rejoined the mother. "Let me now mention that Mr. Stoughton himself does not half credit the declarations of his niece, and has thus far turned a deaf ear to her demands for our arrest and imprisonment. It seems, however, that she has gone to others with her accusation, and among them, to Boardbush—"

"To Boardbush?" echoed Hester. "I knew it! It has been only three days since I last rejected his suit, and this is his vengeance."

She referred to a man who had long been persecuting her with his attentions; a man she had rejected a dozen times in as many months; a fanatical villain, who, by his zeal in hunting the accused, by his cruelty to the alleged witches, and by the juggleries he had practised under the pretence of discovering them, had acquired the terrible name of "The Witch Finder!"

"Yes, last of all, Temperance has gone to this wicked man for assistance," continued Mrs. Waybrook; "and Mr. Stoughton fears that he will not be able to protect us from arrest many days longer, unless some aid, as yet unforeseen, is vouchsafed him. He says that Boardbush has already joined his voice to that of his niece, and that the hue and cry against us is continually deepening. Speak, child, for you seem to have all your calmness. What shall we do? I never saw you look so grand and commanding before. You seem to stand like an angel of light between me and all evil! Speak!"

Again a strange smile played upon the features of Hester, but, ere she could reply, a heavy step resounded on the sidewalk in front of the house, and she lost no time in stepping to one of the windows, and in looking out.

"Who is it?" asked the mother, pallid with dread.

"Boardbush—"

"The Witch Finder."

"He, and no other!" whispered Hester. "In connection with that wicked girl, he has thought of a plan to avail himself of this witchcraft excitement, and he now comes here, with marriage in one hand and death in the other, to press his oft-rejected suit!"

"Oh, heavens! Do not admit him!"

A heavy knock resounded on the door.

"Hush! I will protect you! Keep still where you are. You may cover your face if you choose—it's so white—appear to be sleeping. For months we have seen this thing going on, have suspected

that revenge and other base passions were at the bottom of much of it, and now we know it. But, perhaps, the hour has come when the witch-hunters are to be checked in their course. Be that as it may, I have no fear of this wicked man, and I will meet him!"

"Oh, how calmly, how fearlessly you speak!" murmured the mother, with a loving admiration superior to her terror. "One would say the White Angel!"

Once more smiling strangely, as she had done before at the mention of that name, the maiden pressed a kiss upon the pallid brow before her, drew her form up to its full height, calm, gentle, radiant with beauty and moral grandeur, and took her way towards the front door, where "The Witch Finder" was now clambering furiously for admittance.

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

WHY is a water-lily like a whale? They both come to the surface to blow.

MR. G. F. TRAIN announces a lecture in an advertisement headed, "Clear the Track, the Train is Coming."

LECTURING at Youghal the other day, Mr. G. F. Train said:—Do you know what I did with Grant, our sham hero—our bogus Presidential candidate? (Laughter.) I launched one epigram at him, and, politically, he died the death. We don't like men like Grant. We want statesmen—real men with steam in them. A voice—"Like a Train."

"THERE is but one good wife in this town!" said a clergyman in the course of his sermon—the congregation looked expectant—"and every married man thinks he's got her," added the minister.

LOSING THE BALANCE.

The troop of Japanese jugglers who gave representations in Paris during the Exhibition are now performing at Pesth.

A curious scene is reported to have taken place there on the occasion of the first exhibition. They had been invited to breakfast by an amateur on the morning of the representation, and during the repast the strong white wines of Hungary were circulated freely. In due course, the doors of the theatre were opened and all the seats speedily occupied.

After a long delay the public became clamorous, when a commissary of police came forward to announce that the actors were unable to appear in consequence of having drunk too copiously at breakfast.

Great tumult ensued, and the result was that the defaulters were obliged not only to return the money received, but also to pay a fine of 50 fr. for having failed in their duty to the public. They are said to have required two whole days to recover their equilibrium.

THE veteran Auber, in answer to a gentleman of the other evening, who congratulated him upon his remarkable vigour, said, "They never so often told me I was young as since I have grown old."

"My dear," said a rural wife to her husband, on his return from town, "what was the sweetest thing you saw in bonnets in the city?" "The ladies' faces, my love."

A MERCHANT in a northern city lately put in an advertisement in a paper, headed, "Boy wanted." Next morning he found a box on his door-step, with this inscription: "How will this one answer?"

"PEOPLE talk about their 'grand business enterprises,'" exclaimed Mother Seabold, "why, there isn't one of 'em that's equal to my old clock! They can't go after they're wound up, but my old clock always goes the better for it."

The *Charivari* publishes a woodcut in which England, in the guise of an astronomer, is represented looking through a telescope at the star Theodora in the far distance, and, in consequence, never sees the fell scenes of Fenianism open at her feet, and into which a fall seems imminent.

Lord CHESTERFIELD one day, at a tavern where he dined, complained that the plates and dishes were very dirty. The waiter, with a degree of pertness, observed, "It is said every one must eat a peck of dirt before he dies." "That may be true," said Lord Chesterfield, "but no one is obliged to eat all of it at one meal, you dirty dog."

Too FRIENDLY BY HALF.—One very hot day, Marshal Turenne, wearing a nightcap and jacket, was indulging himself in looking from his ante-chamber window, when one of his household came quietly into the room, and, deceived by the dress, mistook the marshal for a certain ordinary familiar with whom he could take a liberty, and stealing

softly behind, with a hand by no means light, gave him a hearty slap on what an Irishman would call "the broad of his back." The poor valet's dismay may be conceived when, on the marshal's turning round, he discovered the egregious error he had committed. He threw himself upon his knees, and exclaimed, "I ask your lordship's pardon, but indeed I thought it was George." "Well, and if it had been George," replied Turenne, "you need not have slapped so hard!"

A PART OF THE PEOPLE'S WAR.

O say not England's now at war;
Say part of England's nation,
This Abyssinian business for,
That suffers all taxation!
O say not others glory share,
Whereof the cost immense is,
Than those who have alone to bear
The weight of its expenses!
That burden, borne by their sole backs,
The rest oppresses never;
The class who pay the Income-Tax
It grinds and grinds for ever!

Punch.

MUSIC IN DOWNING STREET.—Since his elevation to the Chancery of the Exchequer, the late Secretary of the Treasury has been heard frequently humming to himself the old English air, "The Hunt is up!"—Punch.

SINCERITY.

Niece: "I'm writing to Clara Smith, Aunt. Shall I say anything from you?"

Aunt: You may give her my love, dear. How I do dislike that girl, to be sure!"—Punch.

Two GOOD REASONS.—Harsh comments are made upon the conduct of Sir Morton Peto in retaining his seat for Bristol. He is unkindly accused of doing so in reference to a clique that is not yet ready with a candidate. We believe that this is not the case, and that Sir Morton Peto merely desires to take part in the coming debates on "Charities" and on the Bankruptcy Law.—Punch.

SEVERE BUT NECESSARY.

Time: 1:30 P.M. Circumstances: A "check" in the course of a day with the "All Bite 'Em."

Afable London Tradesman, a recent acquisition to the Hunt (refreshing himself out of a Sherry flask): "Well, now, and what's his Lordship a 'avin' of?"

His Lordship: "I'm taking some cognac, sir, that has been twenty years in bottle. And let me tell you there's a precious deal less brandy in it than there is in your sherry!"—Punch.

A BIT OF RAIL-ERY.—Some people have the detestable habit of carrying "the shop" with them, go where they will. We notice, for instance, that Dimpick, the tallow-chandler, comes up to business every morning from his suburban villa in a "composite" carriage.—Fun.

AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION.—A banker's clerk wishes us to put in a good word for the opening at ten o'clock movement. He remarks, with truth, that anyone whose business has taken him to the Bank of England on "dividend day," must have noted how carefully bankers' clerks study the "Interest" of the public.—Fun.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

Cabby: "Vell! I'm blest if you mustn't be a land surveyor!"

» Fare (indignantly): "What do you mean, sir? What do you infer by that?"

Cabby: "V'y, you've measured the distance to a hinch."—Fun.

WHAT D'YE THINK OF THAT, MY CAT? WHAT D'YE THINK OF THAT, MY DOG?—The introduction of horse-flesh as an article of human food has been heralded by such a prodigious flourish of trumpets at the one-and-a-half guinea Langham Hotel banquet, that we begin to entertain serious misgivings how we shall be able to feed our feline and canine companions—not to put too fine a point on it. At the same time we express our decided opinion that any one who prefers a fillet of horse to a prime mutton chop is to all intents and purposes *of his "Chump."*—Fun.

BUILDING UP A FALSE HOPE.—It is said that the Emperor Theodore has determined to rely, in the forthcoming contest, entirely on his celebrated *mortar*. This confidence, if not well timed, is at least appropriate, seeing that he will be fighting against very heavy odds!—Tomahawk.

A DISPUTE has lately arisen on the subject of the Greek national dish. Surely, there can be no question in the matter, seeing that there have been 31 different ministries at Athens since the midsummer of 1865. It must be a species of "Cabinet" padding.—Tomahawk.

The Abyssinian expedition which is in working order as far as Koomaylo, sixteen miles.

The Abyssinian force now boasts nineteen elephants, which have not a little astonished the natives.

The following is a list of transports engaged in the Abyssinian expedition which were lying in Annesley Bay on Jan. 6.—Steamers: Golden Fleece (hospital ship), Mauritius (ss) (hospital ship), Queen of the South (ss) (hospital ship), Coromandel (ss), England (ss), Thales (ss), The Queen (ss), Oriental (ss), Great Victoria (ss), Kangaroo (ss), Lord Clyde (ss), Peruvian (ss), Sir Bartle Frere (ss). Ships: Percy Douglas, Scotland, Star of India, Europa, Czarewitch, Pride of the Ganges, Philosopher, Sydney Dacres, Atlanta, Howden, Bucantaur, Mayaram Dayaram, City of Agra, Fort George, Maudalay, British Monarch, British Princess, Louisa, Mary Fry, Sam Cearns, Dalhousie, Zoroaster, Octavia, Sir Hugh Rose, Royal Saxon, David Malcolmson, Elish Henderson, India (in quarantine), Berenice, Ariadne, North Wind, Clytie, Kingston, Bruce, Hodrida, Vernon, Arundel, Flying Venus, Mai Blume, Humber, Beannarie Castle, Shah Jehan, C.W., Spray of the Ocean, Howrah, Hippogriff, Queen of India, Euphrates, Lord Elphinstone, Burmah, Peerless, Yorick, Ayderree, Earl Canning, Sir John Lawrence, Napier, Rovera, Defiance, Vanda, Rustam, Congress, Peckforton Castle, Indian Chief, Spitfire, and Jorawar.

SPRING.

BRIGHT, fair spring; bright, fair spring!
What dost thou with thee, dearest, bring?
Come and whisper to me low,
As with me you onwards go,
Whisper me soft and low.

Soft, warm hours, and fairest flowers
To jewel the grassy woodland bowers.
Pure green buds and sunny shine,
These are my gifts to thee and thine,
These are for thee and thine.

Dost thou bring? dost thou bring?
Peace to the human heart, sweet Spring?
Come and whisper to me low,
As with me you onwards go,
Whisper me soft and low.

'Tis not mine that gift divine,
Yet may it be for thee and thine;
Seek it well, and thou mayst win
Peace in a world where dwells no sin,
Where there dwells no sin.

J. HERBERT.

GEMS.

To please the greatest number, it is not so necessary to say, as to leave unsaid.

We had rather see patriotism than gallantry. The one cannot be counterfeited, the other can.

CHILDREN, be more ashamed to speak one bad word, than to have a hole in both elbows of your coat.

BEFORE anything is effected, we think it impossible; but when it is done, we stare, and wonder that it was not accomplished before.

THE road ambition travels is too narrow for friendship, too crooked for love, too rugged for honesty, too dark for science.

WHAT a pity it is that time cannot be bought and sold like commodities in general, since some persons have such an overplus, and others such a deficiency.

TAKE heed of jesting: many have been ruined by it. It's hard to jest, and not sometimes jest, too; which oftentimes sinks deeper than was intended, or expected.

THERE is as much greatness of mind in the owning of a good turn as in the doing of it; and we must no more force a requital, out of season, than be wanting in it.

THEMES of general calamity and confusion have ever been productive of the greatest minds. The purest ore is produced from the hottest furnace, and the brightest thunderbolt is elicited from the darkest storm.

STATISTICS.

A YEAR'S MORTALITY IN LONDON.—Of the 70,588 deaths which occurred in London last year, 15,027 were caused by zymotic diseases, viz.:—Smallpox, 1,352; measles, 1,125; scarlatina, 1,438; diphtheria, 398; quinsy, 44; croup, 723; whooping-cough, 2,251; typhus and infantile fever, 2,174; erysipelas, 264; metria, 157; carbuncle, 44; influenza, 34; dysentery, 85; diarrhoea, 2,942; cholera,

241; ague, 13; remittent fever, 3; rheumatism, 290; syphilis, 423; stricture of urethra, 52; hydrocephalus, 8; glanders, 2; privation, 39; want of breast milk, 481; purpura and scurvy, 100; delirium tremens, 98; intemperance, 58; thrush, 242; worms, 13. Of constitutional diseases, 14,063 persons died viz.:—Gout, 96; dropsy, 630; cancer, 1,464; nome, 39; mortification, 169; scrofula, 410; tabes mesenterica, 1,115; consumption, 8,817; and hydrocephalus, 1,323. Diseases of the nervous system destroyed 8,211 lives, viz.:—Cephalitis, 745; apoplexy, 1,815; paralysis, 1,532; insanity, 139; chorea, 7; epilepsy, 329; convulsions, 2,768; and brain disease, &c., 876. Of diseases of the organs of circulation, 3,258 persons died—118 by pericarditis, 137 by aneurism, and 3,000 by heart disease, &c. Of diseases of the respiratory organs, 12,907 persons died—laryngitis, 323; bronchitis, 7,501; pleurisy, 154; pneumonia, 3,627; asthma, 601; and lung disease, &c., 701. Diseases of the digestive organs destroyed 2,879 lives, viz.:—Gastritis, 82; enteritis, 286; peritonitis, 218; ascites, 143; ulceration of intestines, 125; hernia, 159; ileus, 182; intussusception, 57; stricture of intestines, 35; fistula, 22; stomach disease, 314; disease of pancreas, 1; hepatitis, 185; jaundice, 208; liver disease, 842; and disease of spleen, 25. Other local diseases were the cause of 1,461 deaths. 305 persons died from diseases of the organs of locomotion, and 85 deaths were recorded from phlegmon, 50 from ulcer, and 50 from skin diseases. Developmental diseases of children caused 2,230 deaths; premature birth, 1,105; cyanosis, 112; spine bifida, 56; other malformations, 98; and teething, 859. Childbirth caused 297, and paramenia 9 deaths. To old age 2,609 deaths were referred. To atrophy and debility, 3,767 deaths. 2,148 deaths were the result of accident or negligence, such as fractures and contusions, 845; wounds, 22; burns and scalds, 302; poison, 55; drowning, 335; suffocation, 457; and other accidents, &c., 132. Murder and manslaughter accounted for 194 deaths. By suicide there were 260 deaths,—viz., gun-shot wounds, 15; cut-stab, 59; poison, 45; drowning, 46; hanging, 58; otherwise, 37. The deaths of three persons were recorded under execution. The violent deaths unclassified were 34. The sudden deaths the causes of which were unascertained amounted to 85; and in 746 cases the cause of death was not stated, or was badly defined.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MR. YOUNG, the leader of the Livingstone Search Expedition, has been promoted to the rank of gunner of the first class, appointed Naval Chief Officer in the Coast Guard, and been rewarded by a present of 500.

THE Spanish Government, which had already deprived the infant Don Henry, brother of the King Consort, of his privileges and decorations, has just suppressed his pension of 6,000 duros (5 fr. each) on account of an offensive letter which he had addressed to the Queen.

A MURAL tablet has been erected in St. Giles's to the memory of Sir George Smart. On it is inscribed, "In memory of Sir George Thomas Smart, organist and composer, of Her Majesty's Chapels Royal, born 10th May, 1776, died 23rd February, 1867, aged 90 years. There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God." Heb. iv. 9."

AMONG the objects which belonged to Maximilian, and which have been distributed to his august relations, the King of the Belgians has received the Cross of the Order of Guadalupe, which the Emperor wore at Queretaro; the Count of Flanders his watch and chain; her Majesty Queen Victoria the gold locket containing hair of the Empress Charlotte.

PROCLAMATION OF BANNS.—This important matter has now been taken up in earnest by the civic authorities of Edinburgh, and important correspondence is in dependence with the Right Hon. the Lord Advocate, with a view to have the whole subject brought under revision. It is high time that some steps were taken to mitigate the oppressive charges levied by the parish clerks of Scotland for certificates altogether illusory on a vital point of matrimony.

THE GOLDEN ROSE.—The golden rose sent this year by the Pope to the Queen is not, as might be supposed, an object of trifling value; on the contrary, it is a truly remarkable work of art, representing a branch of a rose-tree, with the thorns and buds in pure gold, and having at the extremity a flower of larger size. The bough rests on an elegant pedestal of silver gilt, which bears the Papal arms among its ornaments. The intrinsic value of the present, calculated by the weight of the gold only, is about 40,000 reals. (400£.)

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. A. B. S.—See our answer to "W. J. H."

A CONSTANT READER.—See our answer to "Alice Louisa."

LILY OF THE VALLEY.—The marriage is legal, without doubt.

MARTIE.—Cases for binding THE LONDON READER are 1s. 3d. each.

BUSHANGER.—We can find no such pamphlet. See our answer to "A. Smith."

W. J. H.—It cannot be a mole, you had better advise the young lady to apply to a medical man.

AN OLD SUBSCRIBER.—To make a good cement, soak some isinglass in water until it becomes soft, then dissolve it in proof spirit, and add a little resin varnish.

A THREE YEARS' SUBSCRIBER.—We know of no such institution. There is an Hospital for Incurables at Putney, the offices of which are at 10, Poultry, E.C.

G. SMITH (Kingston).—You must apply to the magistrates for the license at the same time that other publicans in your neighbourhood apply for theirs. We do not think it likely, however, that you will succeed.

W. T.—You are suffering from nervousness. Medicine will do you no good, except, indeed, tonics. Your cure can be effected only by some mental effort, a plain wholesome diet, temperance, exercise in the open air, and cold bathing.

J. H. CLARK.—To make spiced ale you must obtain from a manufacturer of ginger beer some spiced syrup, which they keep for the purpose. The person of whom you purchase the syrup will tell you the proportionate quantity to use.

J. R. A READER.—Either of the countries named would suit your purpose. For our own parts, however, we should prefer the Brazil, of which Rio de Janeiro is the metropolis, and for this simple reason, that the Empire is more settled than either of the Republics.

T. M. DAVIE.—Hartshorn and oil would in all probability do you much good; at all events, it can do no harm. Try it, and if it do not give you relief, lose no time in seeking medical advice, for symptoms of disease of the kidneys should not be neglected.

JOHN EDWARDS.—Your landlady's claim was undoubtedly illegal, but having paid it, you had better let the matter stop. Your remedy in the County Court, under the circumstances, would be very doubtful, and attended with loss of time and trouble.

J. A. S.—First obtain proofs that the husband left property, and then apply to a solicitor. Without the property left was of some consequence, the cost of obtaining it, under the circumstances named by you, even if you were successful, would exceed the property itself.

M. NORMINGTON.—We are extremely obliged to you for giving us your preference, but at the same time must decline giving you an opinion without perusing the MS. and must, moreover, refer you to the announcement at the bottom of the last column of this page.

A CONSTANT READER.—Boiled oil, when any colouring matter is used. The colour, however, generally comes by time. 2. The pay of a carpenter's mate on board a merchant vessel is, we believe, about the same as that of an able seaman. There is, however, no uniform rate of pay in the merchant service. Much depends upon the owners.

A. SMITH.—Messrs. Cassell have published a "Guide to New Zealand," 2s. 6d. The best works, namely, "New Zealand," by Husthorne, "Taylor's New Zealand," and "Fuller's New Zealand," with either of which works any bookseller will supply you, are more expensive. 2. You could not do better than emigrate to New Zealand or Queensland.

FORGET-ME-NOT.—The face must be bathed, both night and morning, with the wash you name, and it must be allowed to dry in. 2. The best thing to clean the teeth with is a little finely-powdered salt; it strengthens the gums, and is an excellent purifier of the breath. The teeth should be cleaned both night and morning.

BLACKSMITH.—Ure's Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Manufactures, is undoubtedly the best book, but then it is a very expensive work. If you cannot see this at a public library in your neighbourhood, we can only recommend you to purchase the number either of "The English Cyclopaedia," or "Chambers's Cyclopaedia," containing the article, "Sewing Machine."

HORACE.—The ancient musical instrument called *Borodhme's Harp*, formerly belonged to the great Irish monarch, Brian Borodhme, who was killed at the battle of Clontarf, A.D. 1014, when it descended to his son and successor, Domah; the latter prince being deposed soon after by his nephew (whose father he had assassinated) fled to Rome, taking with him his harp and crown. These relics were kept in the Vatican until the harp was given by Pope Clement to Henry VIII, who soon after presented it to the first Earl of Clancarle, in whose family it remained until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when it passed through a female branch

of the De Burghs to the Macdiabons of Glenagh, and from thence into the possession of Councillor Macnamara of Limerick. In the year 1782 it was presented to the Right Honourable William Conyngham, by whom it was deposited in Trinity College Museum, where it still remains. This curious instrument is about thirty inches in height, and highly ornamented, the sounding-board being of oak, and the arms of red sally; it contains a large crystal set in silver, under which was formerly another stone, but which is now lost.

MONA'S ISLE.—1. We should be most happy to oblige our fair correspondent, but as she will clearly see, on reflection, opinions differ, and it would be injurious to our talented staff to point to any "few" of their incubations as being the best. Our constant effort is to have them all good, and yet varied to suit all tastes. 2. The "Maid of Mona" went through twenty numbers of THE LONDON READER.

P. D.—1. A Madeira or Portugal cake is made in the following way:—1 lb. of fine dried sifted flour, and 1 lb. of loaf sugar, 1 lb. of fine butter, till thick, like grated white bread, then put to it two spoonfuls of rose water, two of white wine, and ten eggs; work them well with a whisk, and put in 8 oz. of currants; butter the moulds, only half fill them, and bake. 2. Brown is the flesh of the boar.

W. EVANS.—Isinglass plaster is made by dissolving isinglass in a small quantity of water, and then mixing it with sufficient spirit of wine to keep it fluid, whilst gently brushed over silk or fine lines; as the spirit evaporates the isinglass forms a glaze on the silk or lines. It must be kept dry, and before applying must be quickly and lightly brushed over with a hot moist sponge, which dissolves the glaze sufficiently to make it adhesive.

M. H.—You were certainly not in fault, and "M. P. H." was an ungentlemanly, selfish fellow to behave as he did in the ball-room; indeed, were you our own sister we should feel grievously vexed were you to make it up with so un-gallant a swain; but then, again, you seem desperately in love with this shabby fellow, and against that tender feeling how can you pain us by asking for advice, which, from the very tone of your letter, we are assured you would not act upon.

THE NEW WEDDING.

I have brought, in remembrance,
A beautiful flower
I planted, of old,
On my Aveline's bower;
I planted ore angelis,
In love came from high,
And took her to loverlier
Flowers in their sky.

Oh, where shall my beautiful
White rose be laid?
In the greenest recess
Of the laurel-leaved glade,
Where often she wandered
At evening with me,
And mingled her vows
With the song of the tree?

Shall it rest in the alcove,
Where often at morn
We looked out together
To see the light-born.
As the mist turned to glory
Beneath the beam's kiss,
And our hearts to one mated
In answering blets?

Not in glade, nor in alcove:
Still nearer me, flower
I planted of old,
In the blest nuptial hour!
Oh, yet of my spirit!
Is Aveline part?
Here, till our new wedding,
Rose, lie on my heart!

W. R.

M. EASREY.—1. In the early stages of the disease (small pox) marking may, to a great extent, if not entirely, be prevented, but not afterwärds; time only will render the marks less conspicuous. 2. Handwriting good and ladylike, although it might be slightly improved, by forming the letters less sloping, as that gives it rather a careless appearance. 3. Excessive perspiration arises from various causes, and can only be cured by improving and strengthening the general health. Should it continue you should consult a medical man.

Alice Louisa.—1. The best way to prevent baldness is to wash the head every morning in cold water, and stimulate the circulation of the skin by the friction of a soft brush. 2. To promote the growth of the hair take 2 oz. of sand de cologne, 2 drachmas of tincture of cantharides, 10 drops of oil of lavender, mix well, and use once or twice a day; if the scalp become tender, discontinue for a time, or apply at longer intervals. 3. To improve the complexion procure some horseradish and grate it into a little new milk; it will be fit for use in about seven or eight hours.

JAMESON.—The difference between *knowledge* and *money* is this: knowledge influences and displays its power in the minds of men, money in their actions; knowledge works slowly, silently, and surely, not like the noisy, dashing cestare, but like the broad, flowing river; money works noisily, like the rumbling thunder, yet, nevertheless, powerfully; it can purchase position and influence, but it will never command the respect that knowledge necessarily wins for itself. Money may build mansions and richly adorned dwellings, costly palaces, and splendid temples; it can raise large armies, but knowledge only can direct their movements; money can fit out large navies, but knowledge invents the polar magnet that directs their course; money makes the more powerful, but knowledge the nobler man. The consequence is, that whilst the memory of the one is kept alive by a gaudy tomb, covered with the most fulsome flattery, that of the other is preserved by a record of his virtuous life.

A CONSTANT READER.—*Sphinx* was a monster with the head and breasts of a woman, the body of a dog, the tail of a serpent, the wings of a bird, the paws of a lion, and the human voice. It was sent by Juno, to punish the family of Cadmus to Thebes, where it proposed enigmas, and devoured the inhabitants who were unable to explain them. The Thebans were, however, informed by the oracle that the *Sphinx* would destroy itself as soon as one of its enigmas was ex-

plained. This enigma was—"What animal walked four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening?" Creon, King of Thebes, promised his crown and his sister Jocasta in marriage to him who could give a successful answer. *Edipus* at length explained the riddle, observing that man walked on his hands and feet when young, or in the morning of life, at its noon he walked erect, and in the evening of life, when he was old, he walked upon a stick. The *Sphinx* no sooner heard this answer than it dashed its head against a rock, and expired.

J. V. E.—1. The cost of a marriage license is about 2d. 10s., and is obtainable at Doctors' Commons, or of any surrogate. 2. Special licenses are dispensations from the ordinary rule, under which marriages can only take place in church, or other places duly licensed for that purpose; they must be obtained from the metropolitan or archbishop of the province, and are not readily granted; the cost is about 50s. 3. To be married by registrar three weeks' notice will be required; the fee is only a few shillings, and all that is necessary is, to go before a registrar, declaring the intention of taking each other as man and wife, receiving a certificate of the marriage, which will be in every way legal.

JESSICA.—Marriages in feudal times were only a lucrative mode of extortion, even down so far as the days of Charles I., both with the Crown and the inferior nobility. This barbarous custom gave to the lord of the manor the right of tendering a husband to his female wards, while under age, whom they could not reject without forfeiting as much as any one chose to offer the guardian for such an alliance, and the larger the property of the ward, the larger was the value of the marriage; thus when the Queen of Love and Beauty presided over the tournament, held in honour of the ladies in those chivalric times, they were bought and sold like cattle, and men made blanks and prizes of them in the lottery of life.

PoETRY.—"Sweet Spring," "The Pauper's Funeral," "Aspirings of a Young Poet," by R. Sandy; "Once at a Lonely Cottage Door," by O. B.; "Lines" by J. W. F. and W. W., and "Forgive," by Annie, are declined with thanks, as unsuitable to our columns.

M. M. 5 ft. 10 in., fair, good looking, and a good income. JOHN MARSHALL, twenty-one, an engineer, and with good prospects.

EMILY G. D., seventeen, slight figure, and of good family. Respondent must be about nineteen or twenty, and good looking.

KATE HILTON, twenty-one, tall, dark hair and eyes, lively disposition, domesticated, and respectable; a sailor preferred.

JOHN SHORE, medium height, rather handsome, and with good prospects. Respondent must be tall, dark, and thoroughly domesticated.

ANNA, thirty, 5 ft. 2 in., dark, good looking, and domesticated. Respondent must be a middle-aged man; a widower without inconstancy not objected to.

MAT S., dark, good looking, but no money. Respondent must be a steady mechanic, about twenty-three, good tempered, and fond of home.

AN ENGLISH GIRL, eighteen, medium height, good figure, and would not object to go abroad. Respondent must be a young coloured man.

BEATRICE, ROSA, SELINA, and MARY TAYLOR. "Beatrice," eighteen, medium height, blue eyes, brown hair, cheerful disposition, and with a little money. "Rosa," tall, brown hair and eyes, and fond of music and home. "Selina," 5 ft. 1 in., well educated, fair complexion, with a little money when of age. "Mary Taylor," 4 ft., dark complexion, eyes, and hair, and will have money on her wedding day. Respondent must be tall, dark, and in the Navy.

BASIE, LILY, and MAUDE. "Basie," twenty-one, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, clear complexion, and good looking. Respondent must be dark, tall, and good looking; a tradesman preferred. "Lily," seventeen, fair, hazel eyes, and cheerful disposition. Respondent must be tall and dark, with a moustache; a tradesman preferred. "Maude," twenty-two, medium height, a brunet, good looking, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, and handsome, with 200s. per annum.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

S. Z. is responded to by—"Margaret," forty-two, tall, fair, with money, and thoroughly domesticated.

J. P. by—"Fanny."

HAPPY JACK by—"Flora," eighteen, dark hair and eyes, and an affectionate disposition—"Florence," twenty-one, and—"Jane," nineteen; both respectably connected, and thoroughly domesticated, (handwriting very good); and—"Minnie," seventeen, rather tall, dark brown eyes, well educated, thoroughly domesticated, and will have 200s. when of age. (Handwriting good, but rather too small.)

A. LESLIE by—"Lizzie C.," eighteen, tall, fair, dark eyes and hair, domesticated, but no money.

LAURA STANLEY by—"J. S.," twenty-seven, 5 ft. 7 in., a sergeant in the Royal Marines, good looking, and a loving disposition.

T. J. BEAL by—"E. Browne," twenty-four, tall, brown hair, gray eyes, and a good cook—"Carrie Dalton," twenty-two, very respectable, and fond of home; and—"Helice," twenty-nine, 5 ft. 1 in., dark, and fond of home.

PART LVIII, FOR MARCH, IS NOW READY. PRICE 6d.

* * * Now Ready, VOL. IX. OF THE LONDON READER. Price 4s. 6d.

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. IX. Price ONE PENNY.

N.R.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

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